



FAQs: 'Next Steps to the Strategic Commissioning Framework – a vision for general practice collaboration'

Why have we produced the 'Next Steps to the Strategic Commissioning Framework'?

London health partners are working at pace to transform the way Londoners receive care. In 2015 we launched the 'Transforming Primary Care in London: A Strategic Commissioning Framework'. This has resulted in more GPs in training, a broader skill mix in our primary care workforce, greater use of digital technology and greater access to services for patients.

But more needs to be done. The 'Next Steps to the Strategic Commissioning Framework – a vision for strengthening general practice collaboration is our vision for greater at scale collaboration between practices with the purpose of providing enhanced patients centred care and empowering clinicians and staff to more confidently and effectively administer care.

Why has this come about?

General practice is at the heart of the health service and has served patients, the public and the NHS for over 70 years; providing expert generalist and holistic care and acts as the gateway for those with health concerns, episodic and long term health conditions.

GPs are facing an increasing workload and are under increasing pressures as a large proportion of GPs in the capital are nearing retirement age, and practice nurses are becoming increasingly difficult to recruit. Patients' needs are also changing, both in the complexity of their conditions and in their expectations. All these challenges are occurring at the same time as investment in general practice has fallen significantly, as a proportion of total health spends.

What is the aim of general practice collaboration?

We believe that collaboration is key to achieving a world class primary care. By working together at greater scale, general practice can be both 'small' and 'big'; it can keep providing patients with personalised, whole-person care at practice and network level but it can also provide strategic support, leadership and a strong voice within larger-scale general practice organisations.

What are the benefits of collaborating for providers and commissioners?

There are a host of wide ranging benefits. These include; shared knowledge and good practice, greater resilience, shared back office support, training and skill development,

shared technology and resources, new roles, pooling of team members, combined purchasing power and better care and services (such as online consultations and extended access).

What are the benefits of collaborating for patients?

Patients will still receive more consistent and accessible care, delivered by a multi-disciplinary team with the combined skills to meet their specific needs, a care that is designed and delivered to suit their needs, provided by the right clinician, and accessed through a range of easy-to-use methods, service from clinicians who are motivated, happy, effective and focused on delivering care rather than drowning in administration, have the chance to be represented and involved in decisions relating to their care, have clear expectations of the service they receive, and can co-design changes to these services.

In addition, patients can expect to receive great care for life, from a joined-up, sustainable, high-quality, local network. This is thanks to new models of care and Integrated Care Systems with deep links to communities and a perspective that takes into account the whole population.

By collaborating will practices lose their local governance?

Practices will still retain their local governance. The vision for the 'Next Steps' is greater collaboration between practices; providing patients with personalised, whole-person care at practice and network level and strategic support and leadership within larger-scale general practice organisations such as federations; giving a greater collective voice whilst benefiting from shared experiences, resources and skills.

How can practices identify where they are on the collaborative journey?

The 'Next Steps' document recognises that practices across London are at different stages of collaboration. The guidance includes a 'Next Steps' matrix on how to start, build upon or enhance collaboration locally.

What support is available?

Our commitment is to give practices the support they need to develop and carry out plans for collaboration. We have produced guidance, evidence and resources to facilitate this which are available on the [Healthy London website](#). For more information please contact Adriana Jimenez at england.londonprimarycaretransformation@nhs.net

Have any practices collaborated so far?

Collaboration is not new to general practice in London, and we have already made considerable progress towards our vision. In recent years, practices across the capital have been developing stronger relationships with each other and with other care providers.

For more information visit the [HLP Primary Care Programme website](#).

Are there any collaborative events to participate in?

We will be hosting an event early next year. Please visit the [HLP Primary Care Programme website](#) closer to the date for more details on this. There may also be events bespoke to your local system which your local leaders will tell you about.

Do I have to get involved?

No, this is a voluntary activity. However, evidence, research and feedback show that collaboration has many benefits for providers, commissioners and patients.

How will I know if collaboration makes a difference?

One of the many benefits of collaboration is greater access to shared data and technology which enables individual practices and organisations to assess the impact collaboration is having on different areas with the local system, such as value for money and service experience.

How is this related to NHS England London work?

London is working towards achieving the priorities and vision set out in the [NHS 'Five Year Forward View'](#). This work is part of that ambition and is supported by all London health partners.

Are there any timeframes for this? How long is it around for?

Building collaborative arrangements is part of a long-term vision for London's primary care outlined in the [NHS 'Five Year Forward View'](#). This work is underway and support is available for all practices across London to help them achieve these ambitions.

How will collaboration be funded?

Much of this work does not always need financial investment as it is about different relationships and better utilising existing resources. Many CCGs and GP practices are investing their own funding on this work to help to focus and make progress in this area. National GP forward view funding has helped to underpin collaboration in a number of ways from joint delivery of extended access services, to establishing better ways of working together through time for care programmes, to the use of clinical pharmacists across GP practices. In addition in 18/19 London has decided to use some of the money received from GP Forward view funding allocation to provide further support to commissioners and providers to support and accelerate at scale working.

What is Healthy London Partnership?

Healthy London Partnership formed in April 2015. It has been working across health and social care, and with the Greater London Authority, Public Health England, NHS England, London's councils, clinical commissioning groups, and Health Education England. We have united to amplify the efforts of a growing community of people and organisations that believe it is possible to achieve a healthier, more liveable global city by 2020.

Is this happening elsewhere in the country?

Yes, general practice collaboration is taking place across the NHS in England, Wales and Scotland. Case studies of some of these can be found in the 'Next Steps to the Strategic Commissioning Framework – a vision for general practice collaboration'.

How are patients involved?

Healthy London Partners has a patient and public network. This network reaches out into the wider community to ensure that the voice of patients is paramount in the work of HLP.

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