

# Healthwatch Week

## November 2020



NHS Reset:  
a new direction for health and care

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**The NHS Reset Campaign** brought together NHS Confederation members and partners to reflect on the last six months and what it means for the future

- Engaged with more than 2,500 senior leaders through 50 webinars, roundtables and private meetings; 252 NHS leaders responded to a survey; and received more than 60 blogs from across the system

**Identified five factors fundamental to achieving a sustainable health and care system:**

- Honesty and realism – need to manage Government and public expectations: three-quarters of NHS leaders who responded to our survey said they were not confident of meeting targets to restore routine operations to last year's levels by the end of October
- A lighter, leaner culture – nine in ten leaders believe there must be much more flexibility and freedom for local NHS bodies to listen to and co-produce local services with patient groups and communities
- Integrating Health and Care - NHS England and NHS Improvement should work with representative bodies and their members to create a legislative framework which brings simplicity and clarity and the conditions to support system thinking, population health and local partnerships.
- Tackling health inequalities – this will require a radical and conscious shift in every health economy towards a strategy based on public health
- Extra funding – 9 in 10 respondents said lack of funds would be a significant barrier to meeting waiting time targets

## The funding gap is caused by:

- The operational costs of COVID-19 response: PPE, workforce, infection control
- The ongoing capacity constraints imposed across the system by infection control measures that will be with us for the foreseeable future
- The need to build greater resilience for future pandemic pressures



***Prior to COVID-19 the NHS was struggling under the weight of demand***

- The 95% standard for 4 hour A&E waits was last met in July 2015
- In January 2020, over 45,000 patients were waiting six weeks or more for referral for one of the 15 key diagnostic tests. At the end of March 2020, 79.7% of patients had a referral-to-treatment time of less than 18 weeks, falling short of the 92% standard
- In 2019, the British Medical Association published findings that half of GP surgeries in England are considered unfit for purpose and ill-equipped to meet future demand

***Dealing with the first COVID-19 peak has left the system with a significant backlog***

- At the end of July 2020, nearly half a million patients were waiting six weeks or more from referral for one of the 15 key diagnostic tests – an increase of 1200% on the year before
- Delayed treatment or unmet demand means symptoms may now be more severe
- Primary care services expecting a significant surge in patients, particularly patients with mental health needs, as well as dealing with a backlog of immunisations and screening programmes



## **Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) presents an opportunity to reset the NHS**

### Context

- HM Treasury will publish the CSR on 25<sup>th</sup> November.
- Intended to cover 3-4 year financial settlements, but now one year only, due to COVID.
- However, government committed to fully fund a multi-year resource settlement for the NHS.
- Not yet clear what this means in practice.

### NHS Confed submission to the Treasury:

1. Health and care, and reducing health inequality, should be at the heart of the spending review. The government must deliver on its commitment to a multi-year funding settlement for the NHS – both revenue and capital.
2. COVID-19 means demand is up, capacity is down and waiting lists are increasing.
3. The NHS needs additional investment to stabilise, improve resilience and deliver long term ambitions.
4. The NHS workforce is overstretched and exhausted, and existing commitments to fill clinical vacancies are not being met. The NHS needs additional investment to increase staffing levels, including by extending training places across all professions.
5. The government must follow through on its commitment to reform social care by delivering a sustainable social care system, backed up by reform and a long-term funding settlement.