



Working as a system

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Strategic health authorities and regions: lessons from history

With NHS England and NHS Improvement now a single entity, having seven regional teams to carry out work on the ground, what can be learned from previous incarnations of the NHS that relied on regional bodies? A new report by Nigel Edwards and Helen Buckingham asks the people who were there to provide some much-needed lessons from recent history to apply to the present day.

People, partnerships and place: How can ICSs turn the rhetoric into reality?

Integrated care systems are now legally responsible for leading the charge on using a localised approach to bring multiple aspects of the health care system closer together, and for working better with social care and other public services. But this is far from a new aspiration - why should it be any different this time? Nuffield Trust hosted a series of roundtables to discuss concerns with stakeholders and experts and understand how to ensure the aims are achieved. This new report consolidates these findings and offers ways forward as the new era gets underway.

A brief history of regional tiers in the English health system

1946	Regional Hospital Boards
1974	14 Regional Health Authorities
1996	8 Regional Offices
2002	28 Strategic Health Authorities
2006	10 Strategic Health Authorities
2011	4 SHA Clusters
2013	27 'local area teams' and 4 regions
2022	42 Integrated Care Systems and 7 regions

Lessons from the past

- Clarity of purpose
- Context matters
- Relationships – up, down and out
- Sources of power
- Managing talent

Clarity of purpose

- Regulators, managers or planners?
- National priorities, local priorities

Context matters

- Understand the starting point
- Place & history
- Size
- Personalities

Relationships

- Part of the centre or part of the service?
- Speaking truth to power
- Sense-making, buffering or censoring?
- Performance management, improvement, interference, bullying
- Getting the basics right **and** delivering strategic change
- Looking beyond the health bubble

Sources of power

- Formal levers
- Role of Boards

Talent Management

- Where do regional leaders come from?
- Talent management across the service

Current risks

- Embedded cultures & power dynamics
- Organisational complexity
- Resource constraints
- Defining, measuring & evaluating integration
- Integration fatigue

Building integration into the day job

- The 'Monday morning' question
- Integration in all policies
- Incremental steps
- Devolution of power and resource

Bringing clarity to complexity

- Explicit remit for partnerships
- Clear lines of accountability
- Time to bed in
- Learning systems

Performance management & metrics

- Logic model
- Short, medium & long term measures
- Metrics for oversight, metrics for improvement
- Qual data and quant data
- Patient & staff perspectives
- Return on investment, including social value

Rebalance capacity

- Service capacity
- Management capacity
- Change management capacity

Culture eats strategy for breakfast

- Mind your language...
- Walk in each others' shoes
- A little less conversation, a little more action please!



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