Potential research priorities arising from proposals for NHS reforms in England

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This report, undertaken as part of the 2011 work programme of the Department of Health-funded Policy Research Unit in Policy Innovation Research (PIRU), outlines emerging trends and issues within the current health care policy landscape in England. It is designed to help PIRU anticipate potential priority areas where new research to support policy development might be required. We have assessed the overall landscape, as well as debate around that landscape, reviewed existing and emergent policy issues, and synthesized available evidence around these issues, to identify gaps in knowledge which may merit new research.

The report was prepared by James Barlow and Jane Hendy, with support from Adele Casamassima.

A horizon scanning exercise of this nature can only provide a snapshot of what is inevitably a fast-moving environment. The backdrop to the health policy landscape in England is shaped by broad social and demographic trends that are influencing the demand for and provision of health care – for example, the rise in the proportion of older people or people with long-term chronic conditions – as much as the potential policy and other interventions that have been suggested to cope with them.

While these are clearly very important in influencing overall health care policy, we focus in this report on the specific health care issues and possible policy interventions that are expressed in the Health and Social Care Bill and the subsequent responses to it during 2011. To some extent, the longer term and broader trends are being addressed in the parallel PIRU Health and Social Care Futures project which is developing future scenarios for the NHS in England with a view to understanding more fully their resource, workforce and other implications (the ‘NHSx project’).

This report presents the findings from horizon scanning activities undertaken between January and August 2011. This period captures insights from debate in England regarding the proposed health care reforms and subsequent ‘listening exercise’\(^1\). Our analysis identifies existing and developing evidence underlying the various policy issues outlined in the Bill and any areas where current evidence is weak or absent. These evidence gaps suggest priority areas for new research to support effective policy implementation and evidence-based policy innovation. The methodological approach is described below.

The horizon scanning involved both formal and informal search strategies. The formal strategy relied on a keyword-based reviewing process. Our goal was to identify documents making a core contribution, either conceptually or empirically, to current policy. Our starting point was to identify a heuristic list of potential policy areas and literature considered to have shaped the 2010 NHS White Paper, *Equity and excellence – liberating the NHS* and recent policy thinking. We searched for these sources using websites such as Web of Science to identify recently cited work.
Informal approaches involved browsing the website information of different health care organizations and being alert to ongoing political debates on UK health care reform. This allowed us to prioritise topics which could result in potential policy interventions, pilots and field trials. Informally scanned sources include:

- Public consultations and press releases by DH, professional associations (e.g. BMA); and patients’ groups
- Outcomes from conferences and meetings of UK health care think-tanks and other bodies, including King’s Fund, IPPR, Policy Exchange, Civitas, NHS Confederation, and the Nuffield Trust
- News and reader comments and blogs in the media (e.g. HSJ, BBC, The Guardian).

Our reporting and analytical strategy for the emerging policy issues is tabulated below.

Health care reform in England embraces a number of broad themes. As well as the longer term, demographic, social, economic and technological trends, the current policy debate is underpinned by a need to increase the efficiency and integration of health and social care services. New approaches to the organisation and funding of health care are shaped by these broad trends and also by the ideological nuances of the government of the day. Some of these approaches are innovative, in the sense that they have not been previously used within the English health care system (but may have been used elsewhere). Others are innovative in the sense that they are wholly new ideas.

Under an evidence-informed policy model, the extent to which there is existing evidence for the benefits or costs of a potential new intervention will influence the need for new research to provide backing for its introduction. Our initial scanning activity yielded a number of major areas where future policy intervention is being (or might be) proposed. These formed the basis for five tables (see below), which describe in detail different potential interventions and provide a snapshot of the strength of evidence supporting each intervention:

**Table 1:** Improving health outcomes and quality of care in a context of cost constraints  
**Table 2:** Changes in patient expectations and attitudes  
**Table 3:** Self-management approaches – increased personal responsibility for health  
**Table 4:** Placing patients at the centre of services and increasing accountability to patients  
**Table 5:** Market-based approaches for generating competition, reducing costs and improving performance
Each table has five columns describing:

- **Current policy proposals** – this refers to core policy propositions and suggested implementation rationales
- **Key drivers for that proposal** – the main health care reform drivers as they apply to specific policy proposals
- **Available supporting evidence** – from both established research and ongoing studies regarding the potential policy interventions
- **Identified need/type of research for new evidence generation** – describes potential future research that might be needed to provide evidence for supporting implementation of the potential policy intervention.

The exercise identified a large number of areas where there is emerging policy interest, but where the current evidence base suggests that new research may be merited. For example, the general move is towards increased integration of health and social care services, and integration around specific care pathways. While there has already been much research on the integration of care services, understanding how to design integrated models to deliver particular desirable outcomes and incentivise partners to do this appears to be less well developed.

The column ‘Potential Future Research’ in the tables lists a number of areas where more detailed consideration of the scope of any research effort will be required. We have not attempted to prioritise the listed topics in any way. In summary, the key areas we believe merit attention relate to the following:

1. **Improving health outcomes and quality of care in a context of cost constraints**

This will be a major objective for government into the foreseeable future:

- While there is a desire to develop new, possibly more integrated, care pathways and associated commissioning and payment models, more work needs to be carried out on the design of care pathways which incentivize innovation in service delivery, including ways of rewarding outcome rather than activity, and methods by which commissioning and provider bodies can be incentivized to adopt good practices for moving care closer to patients’ homes.
- There is considerable research on the impact of different approaches to remote care (telehealth and telecare), but work is also needed to develop regulatory and technical frameworks that support remote monitoring and care provision.
- There may be value in identifying areas of care delivery where the demand for high-tech, high-cost interventions can be reduced or substituted by more efficient service/care delivery models, e.g. ‘disruptive innovations’ involving simpler, cheaper technologies that provide sufficiently high quality outcomes.
- There is a need to develop quality standards and associated measures for all the main pathways of care covering both health and social care, aligned to the key domains of quality – effectiveness of treatment and care provided, safety of care provided, and patient experience. Work is needed to establish more...
consistent health and well-being outcome metrics for NHS, public health and social care interventions and services.

2. Changes in patient expectations and attitudes

This addresses the rise in health care ‘consumerism’ and how this can be harnessed to support beneficial changes in health care demand. Empowering patients by improving their ability to exercise choices over their own health has been on the NHS policy agenda for several years. Areas for possible research include:

- The extent to which models of patient choice can be introduced in cases of complex or long-term care pathways, where it is not clear how or when different care providers are chosen along the care pathway.
- How to make better use of information/feedback from patients in the design and improvement of care services. Patients are a free source of information on the quality of care services and they should be incentivized to participate and contribute where possible to service design. Work is needed to explore how best to achieve this and ensure that more weight is given to patient/customer experience surveys, patient satisfaction and real time feedback.

3. Self-management approaches – increased personal responsibility for health

Ensuring people are more involved and proactive in the management of their own care has been a key policy goal for a number of years. However, the evidence for how to achieve this is limited, particularly in relation to:

- Different diseases or conditions
- Changing the relationship between health care organizations and patients towards one that is more interactive
- The best platforms for providing information to patients in a convenient, efficient and effective way
- Measurement of the benefits in relation to health outcomes and cost savings.

Mental health provision also appears to be under-researched, particularly how to increase understanding among key stakeholders of preventative issues, the impact of mental health on service commissioning, and admissions to primary and secondary care services.

4. Placing patients at the centre of services and increasing accountability to patients

This particularly addresses how to achieve transparency in commissioning care services and pathways. Areas for possible research include:

- Commissioning models which provide transparency and accountability, and balance clinically-led commissioning with retaining overall control and accountability over the system.
• How to make information accessible, and easy to understand and use by patients and public.

5. Market-based approaches for generating competition, reducing costs and improving performance

Increased use of competition is highly controversial within the current policy reforms. While there has already been some recent research on supply-side competition in the NHS, areas for further work include:

• The impact of price competition on care pathways that are not covered by tariff prices under the PbR policy (e.g. mental health and community services, specialist acute care and non-elective care), all of which may suffer reduced quality through price competition.
• Payment systems that can facilitate the integration of services (e.g. bundled payments, pooled budgets) and that can link financial rewards to the quality and outcomes of care.
• The impact of ‘any qualified provider’ models, including on feasibility of commissioning whole pathways of care through such providers.
Table 1 Improving health outcomes and quality of care in a context of cost constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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| Health outcomes based on clinically relevant targets  
(Para 3.1,3.2) | Trade-off between volume/efficiency targets and safety/quality of care  
(Para 3.3) | Apparently poorer clinical outcomes in UK when compared with some other EU countries  
(Para 1.8) | Delivering health and social care in community settings to prevent unplanned admissions to hospital (Partnership for Older People Projects)  
Redesign clinical pathways to achieve clinical consensus while agreeing accountabilities |
| Integration of health and social care services to deliver the best patient outcomes  
(Para 3.11) | Release synergies and efficiencies by developing joint and coherent arrangements between health and social/ community care:  
Cut overlapping functions/resources use  
Cut bureaucracy and increase efficiency | Integration of health (NHS) and social care models can improve care delivery to patients with long-term conditions  
Evidence from Kaiser Permanente, the Veterans Health Administration and the Alaska Medical Service about the benefits of integration  
A pilot programme including 16 Integrated Care Pilot studies (ICP) to evaluate a range of integrated models for service delivery.  
Study included different scale and scope of integration among different stakeholders  
Development of GP commissioning consortia which include hospital doctors provides an opportunity to encourage increased integration via the involvement of secondary care clinicians alongside primary care teams  
Integration of care services:  
Redesign service delivery models to benefit from horizontal and vertical integration with other NHS bodies (primary, community and secondary care services)  
Integrate services around individuals and outcomes not around systems and processes  
Provide incentives to make integration sustainable, e.g. by allowing bundled payments across pathways of care, and allowing provider networks to be at financial risk of capitated budget | New care pathways and associated commissioning and payment models:  
Design care pathways which incentivize innovation in care/services delivery  
Simplifying commissioning through disease and tariff pathways paid for by rewarding outcome not activity |

Research priorities arising from NHS reforms
Make better use of available resources by:
- Rationalizing and simplifying the health care system to increase productivity\(^\text{[1,5,3,5,12]}\)
- Focusing on care integration and community engagement (social enterprise)\(^\text{[1,17,3,11,4,21]}\)

To deliver efficiencies and control costs

- Benefits of care integration include improving access to care, managing demand and reducing delayed transfers\(^\text{17}\)
- Limited evidence that service integration improves clinical outcomes and its impact on costs is mixed\(^\text{17,18}\)
- Unplanned hospital (re)admissions occur through emergencies and are often linked with psychiatric issues and chronic conditions\(^\text{19}\)

Long-term condition care at home through multiple approaches: monitoring, community services, medications and medical communication\(^\text{3}\)

- Diagnostic equipment outside hospitals to reduce hospital use and increase patient convenience\(^\text{22}\)
- Shift routine monitoring of patients to ambulatory care to avoid hospital use and improve patient satisfaction\(^\text{22}\)
- Increase access to services, reduce waiting time, avoid admissions and provide care closer to home by introducing advanced paramedics/practitioners in community health and acute care services\(^\text{23}\)

- Evidence around home-based technology to design cost saving services while meeting patients’ requirements\(^\text{66}\)

Pilot study “Principia” modelled a service provision framework to achieve shifts in care from hospital to the community\(^\text{3}\)

- Financial penalties to reduce readmissions\(^\text{15}\) (e.g. 30 days hospital readmission policy, 30% marginal tariff, a local “tariff flexibility”\(^\text{21}\))

- Benefits of care integration include improving access to care, managing demand and reducing delayed transfers\(^\text{17}\)
- Limited evidence that service integration improves clinical outcomes and its impact on costs is mixed\(^\text{17,18}\)
- Unplanned hospital (re)admissions occur through emergencies and are often linked with psychiatric issues and chronic conditions\(^\text{19}\)

- Evidence around home-based technology to design cost saving services while meeting patients’ requirements\(^\text{66}\)

Other approaches to performance improvement and simplification of service delivery:
- Service delivery models focused on hospital upstream intervention,\(^\text{19}\) home based care to deliver low-cost/higher quality care, prevention, knowledge, wellness, communications\(^\text{3}\)
- Improve co-ordination and efficiency of care by developing strong community services and engagement\(^\text{3}\)
- Identify areas of care delivery where demand for high-tech, high-cost interventions can be reduced or substituted by more efficient service/care delivery models\(^\text{20}\)

### Table 1 Improving health outcomes and quality of care in a context of cost constraints

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<td>Pilot study “Principia” modelled a service provision framework to achieve shifts in care from hospital to the community(^\text{3})</td>
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Research priorities arising from NHS reforms
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<td>Invest in prevention and early intervention</td>
<td>• Cost-effective management of chronic and long-term conditions • Shift of policy towards focusing on lifestyle • Rationale for specialist and disease focus during diseases’ onset • Cost-effectiveness of early diagnosis and intervention (e.g. in Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIP) services)</td>
<td>Changing location for the provision of care to home settings by employing remote diagnoses and patient monitoring: • The use of Motiva for patients coping with severe heart failure led to a 67.8% reduction in hospitalizations</td>
<td>Focus on reducing costs of long-term chronic conditions: • Identify and prevent risk factors • Costing and evaluation of care pathways for chronic diseases, based on clear metrics, to facilitate commissioning, comparison and managing improvements in care service delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify technologies supporting new ways to deliver care in a timely and effective way (improving diagnosing, prevention, treatment and monitoring of diseases)</td>
<td>• Reduce costs while improving efficiencies • Increase quality and productivity using fewer resources • Maximize use of skilled staff</td>
<td>Innovations to deliver improvements in quality of care and productivity: • Innovation influences the cost and the practice of health care by enabling different ways of monitoring patients, running medical communication, smart medications (pharmaceuticals)</td>
<td>Range of studies to demonstrate impact of different approaches to remote care: • Develop regulatory and technical (ICT) frameworks supporting innovation for remote monitoring and care provision • ICT support for behaviour change, to improve patient compliance with</td>
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Range of studies to demonstrate impact of different approaches to remote care:
- Develop regulatory and technical (ICT) frameworks supporting innovation for remote monitoring and care provision
- ICT support for behaviour change, to improve patient compliance with...
Support on-line patient/clinician communication and exchange of patients’ data as a new way of delivering care/services efficiently

- Telehealth to keep patients out of hospital
- Benefits of telehealth in various areas, including patient and carer satisfaction and reduction of secondary care admission
- Positive experience in Cornwall about adopting telehealth for patients with COPD, heart failure and diabetes
- Lack of GP engagement with telehealth initiatives

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| Support on-line patient/clinician communication and exchange of patients’ data as a new way of delivering care/services efficiently | • Telehealth to keep patients out of hospital<sup>27</sup>  
• Benefits of telehealth in various areas, including patient and carer satisfaction and reduction of secondary care admission<sup>28</sup>  
• Positive experience in Cornwall about adopting telehealth for patients with COPD, heart failure and diabetes<sup>28</sup>  
• Lack of GP engagement with telehealth initiatives<sup>28</sup> | Established | Developing |

medication, diet and exercise
- Provide educational information through user-friendly technology to help patients gain a better understanding of their illness and take greater control of their lifestyle
- Breakdown telehealth services providing a “menu of services at different levels”. This may help to customize services to the needs of patients and the available budget, drive down prices and deliver short-term visible benefits
- Incentivize adoption by exploiting current policies for moving care closer to patient home
- Develop strategies to overcome low confidence in remote care delivery (telehealth):<sup>28</sup>  
  1) new information strategy to feedback patients’ positive experiences to clinicians; 2) introduce incentives to clinicians (quality and outcomes rewarding system) to adopt telehealth; 3) mainstream telehealth into the education and training of all health care professionals to increase awareness
Maximize use/sharing of patient-held information/records by developing electronic networks and expand them to third parties (social, community and health care) (para 2.12)

Types of quality standards:
- NICE to create quality standards and associated measures for all the main pathways of care covering areas from both health and social care (para 3.14)
- Outcomes framework and NICE quality standards included in commissioning contracts and financial incentives (para 3.1)

Measure care outcomes on the basis of three aligned domains of quality including:
- Effectiveness of treatment and care provided
- Safety of care provided
- Patient experience

Enable international comparison of quality indicators in relation to key groups and services (for children, older people and mental health) (para 3.8)

Account for patient needs and patient satisfaction

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<td></td>
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<td>Established</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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<td>Maximize use/sharing of patient-held information/records by developing electronic networks and expand them to third parties (social, community and health care) (para 2.12)</td>
<td>Increase productivity and performance</td>
<td>Widespread/shared information enables better care, better outcomes and reduced costs (para 2.5-2.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Types of quality standards:</td>
<td>Help patients to better manage their records and their conditions</td>
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<td>- NICE to create quality standards and associated measures for all the main pathways of care covering areas from both health and social care (para 3.14)</td>
<td>Enable successful integration</td>
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<td>- Safety of care provided</td>
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<td>- Patient experience</td>
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<td>- Patient information sharing across and between organisations to identify barriers/facilitators in the development of e-health systems and their impact on different parts of the health care system (para 66)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Evaluation of implementation and cost-effectiveness of electronic networks as a tool for achieving integrated service delivery (para 69)</td>
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<td>New outcome metrics: Establishing more consistent health outcome measures for NHS, public health and social care (para 3.11, 3.12)</td>
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Define care standards and guidelines helping to avoid admissions for sub-acute and post-acute conditions (para 3.8)

Information management protocols and approaches: Including common guidelines, data protection, data definitions and technology standards for effective sharing of information and as enabler of integrated care (para 3.3)
### Table 2 Changes in patient expectations and attitudes

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<tr>
<td>Empower patients by increasing their choices</td>
<td>Consumer focused care is a driver for: • Pushing market mechanisms to change provider behaviour and improve quality and reduces costs as in the case of management for long-term conditions • Introducing patient choice (i.e. choice of GPs and health authorities during the quasi-market reform) led to a decrease in waiting times but also resulted in poorer quality of care • Less than 50% of GPs proposed patients should choose their providers • Demand for care is rising following an increased ageing population and people with disabilities living longer • Patients have increased their expectations about care, their demands for convenience and choice • People’s expectations of health care services outstrips current NHS delivery capacity</td>
<td>Patients’ involvement in care decisions improves their health outcomes, induces compliance and reduces costs as in the case of management for long-term conditions Introducing patient choice (i.e. choice of GPs and health authorities during the quasi-market reform) led to a decrease in waiting times but also resulted in poorer quality of care Less than 50% of GPs proposed patients should choose their providers Demand for care is rising following an increased ageing population and people with disabilities living longer Patients have increased their expectations about care, their demands for convenience and choice People’s expectations of health care services outstrips current NHS delivery capacity</td>
<td>Evidence linking patient choices with behaviour changes: • Models of patient choice in the case of complex or long-term care pathways where it is not clear how/when care providers are chosen along the care pathway</td>
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Enable choice for patients through increasing freedom to choose over treatment options, hospitals and consultant-led team, GP-practice. Increase and support access (to enable choice): 24/7 access to urgent care services (e.g. GP out-of-hours services) and use of ICT to facilitate communications with doctors.

Approaches to increasing patient choice:
- Improved control and choice through easing access to information about care options, clinical outcomes and performance information.
- Provide timely information about the availability of treatment options to support patient choice (e.g. new research studies and treatment and care delivery service options).
- Maximize use of Choose and Book for standard acute care by making providers list consultants’ names on Choose and Book lists.
- Any booking system in primary care should be flexible enough to reflect different types of patients and their need to see their doctor of choice at a convenient time.

Potential benefits and regulatory aspects:
- Lack of regulation and clear guidelines.
- No evidence available about the effectiveness and their impact on health behaviour.

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<td>Enable choice for patients through increasing freedom to choose over treatment options, hospitals and consultant-led team, GP-practice</td>
<td>Improve quality, Delivering choice, Performance driven by patient choices</td>
<td>Previous reform only promoted provider choice for first appointment of elective care, Evidence suggests that patients choose appointments on the basis of waiting time, convenience and continuity of care (seeing the same nurse or GP), Speed of access at the expense of patient choice is not desirable, Quality improvement under non-urgent primary care settings is based on patients’ broader choice opportunities, Doctors focusing on achieving waiting time (quality) targets (backed by incentive payments) did not respond to patient choice needs, No real progress so far to make NHS patient-led.</td>
<td>Current use of Choose and Book is limited: Uptake of choice is not widespread and many patients do not practise choice, Choose and Book system on which patient choice relies is restrictive and the quality of information on providers available to patients is weak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase and support access (to enable choice): 24/7 access to urgent care services (e.g. GP out-of-hours services) and use of ICT to facilitate communications with doctors</td>
<td>Improve efficiencies and patient satisfaction, Shift the location of service provision, Cutting costs from unnecessary hospital visits and unscheduled admissions</td>
<td>“Poor” level of care due to spending cuts for out-of-hours GP services, Increasing use of ICT to support online health applications for health professionals and consumer health applications, Patients look for health information, accessing NHS Direct and NHS Choices, blogs and disease patient networks.</td>
<td>NHS Direct is trialling pilots on the use of web services, patient management, and non-emergency phone services, NHS Bristol is due to roll out a trial for using mobile phones for telehealth.</td>
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Potential future research:

- No real progress so far to make NHS patient-led.
Implementation of personal health budgets

GP consortia and commissioners have to work in partnership with local communities and patients

More weight to patient/customer experience surveys, patient satisfaction and real time feedback

Payment/reimbursement models:

How to best involve patients/public in:

Better use of information/feedback from patients:

Table 2 Changes in patient expectations and attitudes

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| Implementation of personal health budgets \[para 2.22\] | Personal budgets give people real control over choices which, in turn, can drive clinical and services performance | • No real progress so far to make NHS patient-led \[para 2.21\]  
• Positive evidence in UK from ongoing programmes of personal health budget pilots plus international and social care experiences \[para 2.8,2.9\] | Positive evidence from the current Personal Health Budget pilot programme \[para 2.22\] |
| GP consortia and commissioners have to work in partnership with local communities and patients \[para 4.6\] | Empower communities to drive improvement of services, local partnerships and care integration | The cost-effectiveness of empowering communities based on improvements in the mental and physical health of communities \[para 4.1\] | A pilot study on active and engaged commissioning for people with long-term conditions \[para 4.7\] |
| More weight to patient/customer experience surveys, patient satisfaction and real time feedback \[para 2.9\] | To improve patient compliance and satisfaction | Patient satisfaction and customer care improve through health care supply:  
• Community care/services have delivered financial and patient benefits due to diffusion of new technologies in primary care \[para 2.9\]  
• Provision of rehabilitation and palliative care nearer to the patients \[para 4.5,4.6\]  
• Establishment of nurse-led primary care clinics reducing the need for hospital outpatient facilities | • A number of hospitals have reduced their readmissions by including patient interviews at the time of readmission to help find underlying causes that were not picked up by clinicians \[para 4.7\]  
• A pilot study on designing patient-centered service improvement by using patient experience \[para 4.7\] |

Research priorities arising from NHS reforms
Research priorities arising from NHS reforms

Table 3 Self-management approaches – increased personal responsibility for health

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| Patients to be more responsible for their own care and health status | Patient self-care increases patient compliance and reduces the demand for health care | Evidence supporting the impact and cost-effectiveness of an approach empowering communities | Making patients involved and proactive in the management of their own care:  
- How to do this within different disease frameworks  
- How to change the relationship between health care organizations and patients from passive to active/interactive  
- What are the best platforms (multi-channel) to drive convenience, efficiency and effectiveness and cope with access to health information for people who are digitally excluded?  
- How to measure outcomes and cost savings/reduced resources wastage |

| Information to support health care self-management by covering different conditions, treatment options and lifestyle choices | The use of the internet to impact on patient self-management, expectations and behaviours |  | Develop analytic and strategic/operational frameworks for health care organizations and health professionals for embracing internet-driven patient information and its use  
- Need to integrate the self-care agenda (for chronic diseases) with internet-facilitated and self-initiated patient activities into the delivery of care |
Long-term chronic conditions including cardiovascular disease (coronary heart disease and stroke), cancer, diabetes, dementia, mental ill health and obesity are priority targets for preventive care and patients’ behavioural changes.48

'No health without mental health': improve public mental health and well-being across whole population to achieve social, health and economic goals.49,51,52

To reduce the burden of chronic diseases through effective prevention and individual behaviour change
Drive cost savings and improve health outcomes by patient participation

Well-being, resilience and attitudes to behaviour change affect the success of public health intervention.49
Preventive care is enabled by Self-responsibility and behavior change.48

Leverage on patient responsibility to improve outcomes, burden of long-term disease and associated social care dependency levels.52

Evidence shows that mental well-being has positive impact on health, social and economic outcomes.50 and ref therein
Evidence about the cost-effectiveness of mental health prevention and promotion.53
Evidence and rationale for well-being.54
Communities do not engage with services and public health initiatives unless public mental well-being is improved.55

Promote well-being to drive changes in behaviour and improve attitudes towards own health management

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Change 4Life project56

Tools that can induce public behaviour change:50,52
- Personal budgets
- Benefits provision
- Incentives for patients to comply with health care goals

More attention to mental health provision:
- Increase understanding among key stakeholders of prevention and promotion of public mental health, its impact on commissioning consortia and in reducing admissions to primary and secondary care services.59
- Metrics to evaluate mental well-being (local outcomes, proxy indicators, broad/cross government outcome measures) as part of GP performance assessment.49

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Research priorities arising from NHS reforms
Table 4 Placing patients at the centre of services and increasing accountability to patients

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| Transparency and accountability of information to patients by timely action on patient experience and feedback | • Support patient choice | • User experience and feedback can drive health care providers’ responsiveness | **How to achieve transparency in commissioning:**
|                                   | • Give more control to patients | • Open publication of information improves clinical practice | • Commissioning models which provide transparency and accountability, and balance clinically-led commissioning and retain system control/ accountability
| A revolution in how information flows and is used within NHS | • Enable behaviour changes and efficiencies by diffusing information | • Little evidence that patients use the available information | • Make information accessible, easy to understand and to use
| Increase transparency and accountability of providers for the accuracy of patient data and public comparable information (e.g. safety, effectiveness, patient experience) | • Promote quality | | |
| Key public information supporting accountability and choice to be focused on safety, effectiveness and patient/carer experience | • Increase public accountability | | |
| Widespread use of patient experience data and Patient Report Outcome Measures | Enable comparison of peers to trigger competition and assess performance | | Need to set out and trial how accountability arrangements will work in practice within pathways of care for clinical and community service delivery

**Research priorities arising from NHS reforms**

**Policy proposition**

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| • Promote quality | | |
| • Increase public accountability | | |
| Enable comparison of peers to trigger competition and assess performance | | Need to set out and trial how accountability arrangements will work in practice within pathways of care for clinical and community service delivery

**Key public information supporting accountability and choice to be focused on safety, effectiveness and patient/carer experience**

**Widespread use of patient experience data and Patient Report Outcome Measures**

**Mid-Staffordshire case – relevance of patient and staff feedback for quality control**

**Hospitals reducing readmissions through patient interviews at time of readmission to find underlying causes that were not picked up by clinicians**

**How best to capture patient feedback/experience when measuring health outcomes**
GPs-led consortia to take commissioning decisions according to patients’ best interests

Include public and first line health professionals (e.g. hospital doctors) within local commissioning decisions/boards

Transparency in local achievements following commissioning and expenditure decisions

Drive up quality

Poor commissioning can be damaging to the integration of services

Evidence from pathfinder commissioning consortia uptake and GPs’ willingness to engage with commissioning policy

Poor commissioning can be damaging to the integration of services

Evidence from pathfinder commissioning consortia uptake and GPs’ willingness to engage with commissioning policy

Include public and first line health professionals (e.g. hospital doctors) within local commissioning decisions/boards

Increase accountability

Support integration of care

- Clinical commissioning groups to roll-out “Urgent Clinical Dashboard” to make GPs accountable for expenditure linked with their patients
- Clinical commissioning groups to decide levels of service provision to improve efficiencies (pilots about non-emergency phone services, practice local-level reporting systems, web-services, out-of hours appointments, 24/7 care services)

Successful pilot in reducing acute spending by monitoring unscheduled care activity, emergency admissions and GP out-of-hours activities

- Clinical commissioning groups to roll-out “Urgent Clinical Dashboard” to make GPs accountable for expenditure linked with their patients
- Clinical commissioning groups to decide levels of service provision to improve efficiencies (pilots about non-emergency phone services, practice local-level reporting systems, web-services, out-of hours appointments, 24/7 care services)

Drive local overview scrutiny

Increase accountability

Reduce spending

Reduce variations in the quality of services

Evidence from pathfinder commissioning consortia uptake and GPs’ willingness to engage with commissioning policy

Evidence from pathfinder commissioning consortia uptake and GPs’ willingness to engage with commissioning policy

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Primary and secondary care performance

Overall patient satisfaction

Coordination of service provision

How to enable direct engagement/responsibility to clinicians for:

- How services are delivered and resources committed
- Commissioning expenditures
- Linking clinical decisions with their financial consequences

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Potential future research

- Clarify commissioning outcomes framework and GPs’ financial incentives for effective management of:
  - GPs’ conflict of interest
  - Patients’ confidence in GPs’ commissioning decisions
  - Effective commissioning

- Optimum configuration of commissioning boards to account for:
  - Primary and secondary care performance
  - Overall patient satisfaction
  - Coordination of service provision

- How to enable direct engagement/responsibility to clinicians for:
  - How services are delivered and resources committed
  - Commissioning expenditures
  - Linking clinical decisions with their financial consequences
To promote supply side competition for healthcare services provision by a variety of providers including the private sector, the NHS and the third sector (social enterprises), the following objectives can be pursued:

- Promote cost effectiveness
- Increase choice of services
- Improve quality

On the supply side:

- Specialized services require limited competition to ensure quality, while in cases of less specialized services competition is more effective for improving quality and efficiency.
- Competition helps to provide services which are value for money.
- Mixed results from the use of competition in the NHS as a means to improve performance.
- Limited evidence on impact of direct competition for individual patients’ custom between services (hospital and community based) and GPs.
- Competition for the market as used by US Medicare enables cost reductions and quality improvements.
- Evidence about cost containment strategies and competition from the German health care system.

On the supply side:

- Competition for the market encourages co-operation among providers: 16 PCT organizations piloting integrated service delivery.
- International experience about competition within the market enabling pathway-based disease management and being piloted in US and UK.

Supply side competition models and issues:

- Need to reconcile and balance conflict between competition, collaboration and integration of care services.
- Competition has to align with choice of providers without leading to fragmentation of services or reduction in quality.
- Promote market principles where appropriate to avoid challenges when “the wrong type of competition” is used in healthcare.
- Tailor competition to local circumstances (e.g., rural vs urban areas) and to the spectrum of services in the NHS (A&E and specialist services vs long term and chronic disease services management).
- Pilot how integrated services and competition rules can be delivered in practice.

### Table 5 Market-based approaches for generating competition, reducing costs and improving performance

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<td>Promote supply side competition for healthcare services provision by a variety of providers including private sector, the NHS and the third sector (social enterprises)</td>
<td>Promote cost effectiveness, Increase choice of services, Improve quality</td>
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<td>Develop and pilots how integrated services and competition rules can be delivered in practice.</td>
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| Pilot how integrated services and competition rules can be delivered in practice. | |
Research priorities arising from NHS reforms

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<td>Pricing mechanisms based on tariffs of nationally regulated prices driving productivity and accounting for defined quality of services on the basis of clinical evidence and outcomes [\text{para 5.12}]</td>
<td>To achieve long term financial benefits</td>
<td>Established</td>
<td>• Price competition per se leads to reduction in quality and increase in transaction costs [59]&lt;br&gt;• In UK and US, competition for health services at fixed prices led to improvements in quality and efficiency (improved access, reduced waiting times, increased efficiency, improved financial management) [60,61]&lt;br&gt;• Pricing regulated by a tariff system based on health outcomes, and not on volume/activity, prevents providers competing on quality and safety of care [93,94]&lt;br&gt;• Trial the impact of price competition on care pathways that are not covered by tariffs under the PbR policy [95] (e.g. mental health and community services and specialty acute care, non-elective, long-term, complex care and large proportion of specialist acute care). These may suffer reduced quality through competition&lt;br&gt;• Also need to trial payment systems that can facilitate integration of services (e.g. bundled payments, pooled budgets) and link financial rewards to the quality and outcomes of care [70,72]&lt;br&gt;• Develop payment systems rewarding health outcomes not activities (current PbR system) [4]&lt;br&gt;• Current PbR can “ossify innovation” and a new pricing system should work across care pathways and provide scope and financial incentive for innovation [4]&lt;br&gt;• Develop a tariff system that comprises more than one service to facilitate commissioning of integrated pathways of care [95]</td>
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**Table 5** Market-based approaches for generating competition, reducing costs and improving performance

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| ‘Any qualified provider’ to deliver services\(^\text{[para 4.21]}\) | • To drive innovation  
• Support competition  
• Provide options for patients to choose from | Private providers are risk minimizers and profit maximizers, leading to the risk of “cherry-picking”\(^\text{[62]}\) | Impact of ‘any qualified provider’ models:  
• ‘Any qualified provider’ policy is not supported by evidence of real patient and cost benefits and studies in this area need to focus on feasibility of provision and commissioning of whole pathways of care\(^\text{[95]}\)  
• Policy roll-out by a multi-staged implementation strategy in areas of care most likely to benefit from any qualified provider policy. These should include elective and episodic care where outcomes are defined and easy to measure\(^\text{[30]}\)  
• Promote provision of integrated packages of care by creating networks of regulated providers competing according to specified products, quality and tariffs\(^\text{[50]}\)  
• Trials to test best models for the point at which patients exercise choice between providers (this is difficult to predict in the case of complex or long-term care pathways)\(^\text{[50]}\)  
• Create a market/opportunities for providers/competitors (new market entrants) able to focus on |
On the demand side: Implement effective commissioning and patient choice policies

To drive up quality and efficiencies

- Effectiveness of choice and competition framework is dependent on clear regulatory framework and good information
- Evidence about the indirect impact of choice-generated competition on quality
- Ambiguity about who the main purchaser is within NHS: patients or commissioners. Different relevance of patients’ choices versus GPs’ referring/contractual decisions to the impact of hospital competition

Limited evidence on choice and competition operating within the same framework

- Facilitating both commissioning and patient choices by enabling patients to choose from pre-approved provider lists that have met defined service specifications
- How to address problem of clinical commissioning groups facing financial incentives to refer patients to services owned and run by their member GPs

Research priorities arising from NHS reforms

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consumers/patient-centric health care solutions, as in the case of voluntary sector

- Evidence about the indirect impact of choice-generated competition on quality
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The Policy Research Unit in Policy Innovation Research (PIRU) brings together leading health and social care expertise to improve evidence-based policy-making and its implementation across the National Health Service, social care and public health.

We strengthen early policy development by exploiting the best routine data and by subjecting initiatives to speedy, thorough evaluation. We also help to optimise policy implementation across the Department of Health’s responsibilities.

Our partners
PIRU is a novel collaboration between the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), the Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), and the Health and Care Infrastructure Research and Innovation Centre (HaCIRIC) at Imperial College London Business School plus RAND Europe and the Nuffield Trust.

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