

The Gathering Storm – Life in a cold/frigid climate

Kent & Medway Principles/Concordat

In his Foreword to the NHS Operating Framework for the NHS 2010/11, David Nicholson CBE stated that *“we are at a critical juncture in the history of the NHS. After a decade of investment and reform that has helped drive real improvements for our patients, the NHS, along with other public services, is about to enter perhaps the toughest financial climate it has ever known.”*

He went on to argue that 2010/11 will be a pivotal year in the NHS, highlighting the requirement on us to identify £20 billion of efficiency savings by the end of 2013/14 that can be reinvested to deliver year on year quality improvements. He suggested focusing on three things to make this possible. Firstly, improving quality whilst improving productivity, using innovation and prevention to drive and connect them. Secondly, having local clinicians and managers working together across boundaries to spot the opportunities and manage the change. Thirdly, to act now and for the long term.

All organisations involved in the commissioning and delivery of health and social care will be affected by the changes. Making incremental cuts or tinkering with existing systems is unlikely to generate the scale of savings required so we will need to think more creatively, about how we commission and provide services in the future. It is clear that without unprecedented levels of trust and collaboration between commissioners, service providers, public representatives and the people that they serve, this scale of change will not be delivered.

It is against this background that the Chairs, Chief Executives and Medical Directors in Kent and Medway have produced the following principles that they hope will provide a useful framework within which we can work together most effectively, driving quality whilst reducing costs and improving the patient/user journey.

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These draft principles have been developed by the Chairs, Chief Executives and Medical Directors of the NHS organisations in Kent and Medway. Their purpose is to guide the way that we will work together in the months and years to come.

1. This is a total health economy and partners leadership issue. Sustained and continued clinical leadership in partnership with managers is essential to help deliver the changes needed.
2. We recognise the importance of engaging with our stakeholders and the need to involve citizens throughout our planning and delivery of services.
3. Each organisation pursuing business as usual will not get us through the gathering storm.
4. Consider the impact on partner organisations. Discuss plans and problems early to avoid damaging consequences.
5. No action should be taken which could compromise the quality of care for patients.
6. Every organisation has to be willing to modify its strategy and consider/concede some resources/flexibility to partners to ensure success. Boards must balance this with their core governance role and the tensions inherent within the system.
7. We commit to a no surprises/mutual trust and risk sharing approach based on collaboration and transparency.
8. Our aim is to collectively create the conditions for success, including mutual support for Boards and individuals who are leading the way in transforming services.

13 January 2010

Chairs, Chief Executives and Medical Directors of NHS Organisations in Kent and Medway and participants at the Kent and Medway Storm Event