

12 May 2014

A health and social care conversation

The **HFMA**, **CIPFA** and the **Association of Directors of Adult Social Services** have joined forces to support health and social care organisations to meet the integration agenda head on.

Health and social care services need to be transformed to meet current challenges. These challenges include an ageing population, the changing burden of disease with increasing prevalence of long-term conditions, and rising patient and public expectations. The challenges coincide with a difficult financial environment for the economy in general, the public sector and the health and social care sectors in particular.

The quality of services needs to be improved and integrated around the needs of patients and service users. This will require greater integration of health services – for example acute and community or mental health and community services – and greater integration of health with social care activities and broader local government activities such as housing.

Integrating services around the needs of patients and users does not necessarily mean merged structures. However all stakeholders will need to work closely together and understand each other's structures, funding arrangements and pressures to ensure that patients and users receive services in a seamless way.

In particular there needs to be an understanding that NHS bodies and councils locally work in different political contexts. Health and wellbeing boards have a crucial role in driving forward the integration agenda.

The Better Care Fund – starting in 2015/16 – puts significant resources behind this integration agenda. However the creation of the fund – with a major transfer of funds from health to social care – puts additional immediate pressures on an NHS already facing an estimated £30bn funding gap by 2021. And it comes at a time when local government is dealing with major budget cuts – a 43% cut in central government funding between 2010 and 2016.

The three bodies met for the first time in March and now plan to hold a regular forum for joint discussion and debate at what they all see as a critical time. The three bodies believe that the challenging agenda can only be met if health and social care can work closely together.

Most importantly, this joint working needs to be taken forward at a local level, informed by evidence and shared analysis. However the three organisations believe there is a national role for them in examining the challenge from a financial perspective and facilitating better understanding across the sectors, identifying obstacles to better integrated services and spreading best practice.

In particular, the three bodies want to explore the opportunities for:

- Joint networking – bring health and social care finance practitioners together to develop shared understanding of challenges and share best practice
- Education – raise awareness across the sectors of how funding flows and how services are delivered
- Research – identify areas where academic research could help to understand the impact of integration on the quality and costs of service provision.

This is the first time the three bodies have worked together to ensure all health and social care organisations consider patients' and services users' pathways in totality, not just within their own specific sector.

HFMA's Chief Executive Mark Knight said: "There is an increasing recognition of the need to integrate services around patients and service users – both within the health sector and between health, social care and broader local government activities. This integration will demand a much greater mutual understanding of how services are currently delivered in each sector, how the funding flows and the different contexts that services operate within. And we also need to explore how different delivery models will impact on costs and quality. We are very much looking forward to our regular 'health and social care conversations' with CIPFA and ADASS and are confident it will add real value and support the delivery of the integration agenda."

CIPFA's CEO Rob Whiteman said: "The scale of the task that faces both the NHS and local authorities in the delivery of health and social care integration in the next few years is huge.

"CIPFA is committed to exercising every lever it can to ensure that the public sector is fully equipped for this task which is why it is encouraging to be working alongside bodies such as HFMA and ADASS.

"Through working together we hope that we can support the sector in understanding the structures, funding arrangements and pressures we all face so that we can collectively deliver the world class service that patients and the taxpayer deserves."

ADASS President David Pearson said: "This initiative by our three organisations would have been important, and had important repercussions even in the best of times. But in the present circumstances, with the need to join up commissioning and some services growing in importance, and measures to confront austerity having major impacts across the entire health and social care financial spectrum it has become even more vital.

"CIPFA and HFMA's financial acumen coupled with ADASS's daily commitment to both social care/health services and getting value for money as needs increase will help fashion an important partnership to help improve our financial performance on behalf of the people we serve."

ENDS

Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA):

- 5000 members working largely in NHS finance departments across the UK
- Registered charity status
- 13 branches, covering the four home nations
- A headquarters in Bristol and conference centre in London
- More than 300 partner organisations

HFMA was established in 1950 as an independent and charitable organisation. It represents finance professionals' views to the government and other key national stakeholders such as Monitor, the government's health service regulator, NHS England and the National Trust Development Authority as well as the media. More information can be found here:

www.hfma.org.uk

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CIPFA, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, is the professional body for people in public finance. Our 14,000 members work throughout the public services, in national audit agencies, in major accountancy firms, and in other bodies where public money needs to be effectively and efficiently managed. As the world's only professional accountancy body to specialise in public services, CIPFA's portfolio of qualifications are the foundation for a career in public finance. They include the benchmark professional qualification for public sector accountants as well as a postgraduate diploma for people already working in leadership positions. They are taught by our in-house CIPFA Education and Training Centre as well as other places of learning around the world. We also champion high performance in public services, translating our experience and insight into clear advice and practical services. They include information and guidance, courses and conferences, property and asset management solutions, consultancy and interim people for a range of public sector clients. Globally, CIPFA shows the way in public finance by standing up for sound public financial management and good governance. We work with donors, partner governments, accountancy bodies and the public sector around the world to advance public finance and support better public services. This includes the development of local professional qualifications in African countries like Lesotho and Nigeria and in Europe in post conflict states in the Balkans.

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) represents directors and senior managers of adult social services departments in English local authorities. Directors (DASSs) have statutory responsibilities for the social care of older people, adults with disabilities and adults with mental health needs.

In many authorities ADASS members will also share a number of responsibilities for the provision and/or commissioning of housing, leisure, libraries, culture, and community safety on behalf of their councils. More than a third of DASSs are also the statutory director of children's services for their authority.