

Clinical Senates and Networks

Briefing Note

December 2013

The 2012 Health & Social Care Act put clinical leadership at the heart of the new NHS commissioning system. As part of these changes 12 Clinical Senates were established across England to provide a trusted source of advice to commissioners in Clinical Commissioning Groups, Health and Wellbeing Boards and NHS England. Building on the success of previous networks, four Clinical Networks have been convened in each of the 12 areas around Cancer, Cardiovascular, Maternity & Child Health, and Mental Health, Dementia & Neurological conditions.

This briefing provides an introduction to the work of the Senate and Clinical Networks, and explains how, in partnership with VONNE, patients and the public will be engaged in their work.

Introduction

Clinical Senates have been established across the country and play a unique role in the commissioning system, providing strategic clinical advice and leadership across a broad geographical area to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWB), NHS England and other providers.

The North East Senate and Clinical Networks cover North Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, Durham, Darlington, Tees, and the Hambleton & Richmond Districts of North Yorkshire. They are hosted by the NHS England Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Area Team.

Clinical Senate

Clinical Senates have been described as "the conscience and guiding intelligence" of the new Health & Social Care arrangements. Clinical Senates span professions and include representatives of patients, volunteers and other groups. They work closely with Strategic Clinical Networks, Academic Health Science Networks, Local Education and Training Boards and research networks to give advice based on local priorities and support to commissioners to bring improvements in quality.

Importantly, Senates are independent. The Senate Council has 20-25 members and an Assembly of around 200 people. Members of the North East Senate were selected based on their experience, strategic abilities and track record. Professor Andrew Cant, clinical director of the Great North Children's Hospital, in Newcastle, has been appointed Clinical Senate Chair. Senate members include GPs, a Pharmacist, Heads of Nursing, Consultants and Medical Directors. A small number of individuals were co-opted including the North East Centre Director from Public Health England, a representative from the North East Directors of Adult Social Care, Health Education North East, the Academic Health Science Network, and VONNE.

Strategic Clinical Networks

Unlike the Senate, which is an entirely new body, Strategic Clinical Networks build on the success of previous networks that combined the experience of clinicians, patients, staff and providers to improve the way care was provided.

To bring some structure to the range of networks that were operating across the country prior to the new arrangements, NHS England has determined that each area will have four Strategic Clinical Networks:

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular
- Maternity and Child Health
- Mental Health, Dementia and Neurological conditions

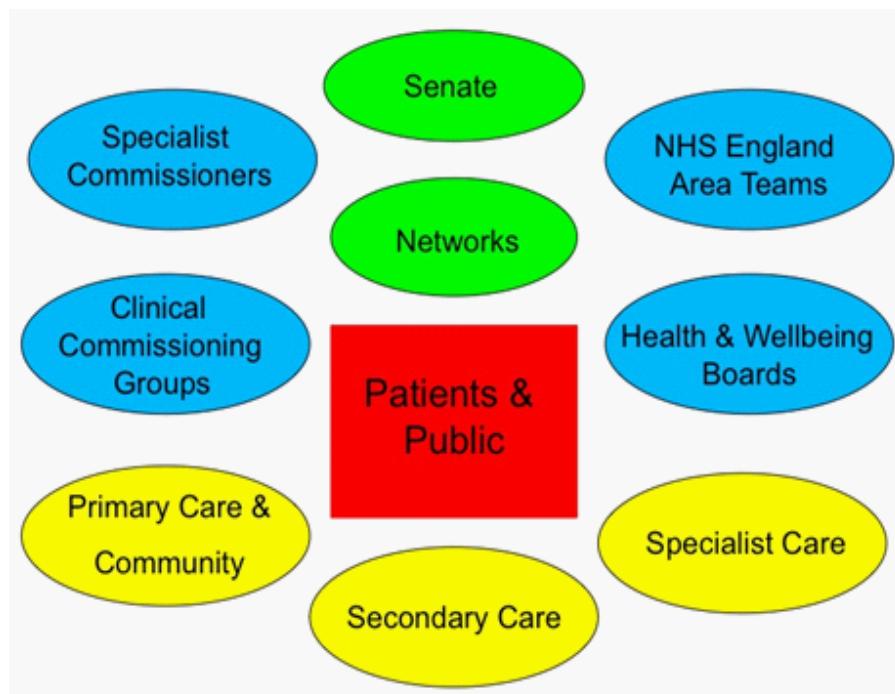
Strategic Clinical Networks will assist commissioners in ensuring best value for money in addition to improving the quality of care and outcomes for patients.

Local networks: decided on and resourced by CCGs to support the achievement of local priorities and ways of working; and/or networks established and maintained by a group of providers to enable the joint delivery of a service.

There are four types of networks working across the NHS

- Strategic Clinical Networks (this briefing)
- Operational Delivery Networks
- Local Professional Networks
- Local Networks

The Senate, Networks and the wider Health & Wellbeing System



Connecting the Senate and Networks with the VCS

Senates and Strategic Clinical Networks will work on the guiding principle of engaging patients and the public in all their work, whether it is developing quality improvement bodies or providing an oversight of the network's activities. Infrastructure organisations like VONNE and VCS groups working in the field of wellbeing, health and social care social care are important partners for Networks and the Senate.

VONNE is working with the Networks and Senate team in the North East to ensure that our sector networks link into the new arrangements. As the Senate and Clinical Network work programmes take shape, VONNE will facilitate a flow of information to and from the sector, ensuring our skills, knowledge, experience and voice shape and influence outcomes.

Joanne Smithson, Health & Social Care Policy Lead, is coordinating this work and can be contacted on joanne.smithson@vonne.org.uk You can read more about VONNE's work with the Senate and networks on our website:

www.vonne.org.uk/policy/health_and_well_being/clinical_networks_and_senate.php

Other NHS Networks

Operational Delivery Networks: focused on coordinating patient pathways between providers over a wide area to ensure access to specialist resources, such as critical care beds or burns units.

Local Professional Networks: developed by NHS England to advise on the commissioning of a specific service such as dental, pharmacy and optometry services.

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Further information

The Way Forward: Strategic Clinical Networks. NHS Commissioning Board, a special health authority, July 2012. Available at <http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/way-forward-scn.pdf>

Developing Clinical Senates and Networks

Department of Health, September 2011. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/developing-clinical-senates-and-networks>

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