

The NHS' role in realising every place's potential

Helping you influence your local economy

The government's economic priority since 2010 has been to shift powers away from the centre to local communities, businesses and citizens. This recognition that where the drivers of growth are local, the decisions should also be made locally has seen a dramatic reshaping of local economic planning and strategy – from Westminster to town halls, from Downing Street to formal devolution.

Where does the NHS fit in?

Interaction between the health sector and those responsible for local strategic economic planning has been limited, meaning knowledge of our significant contribution to driving prosperity in the towns and cities across England – and any resultant inward investment into our sector – remains low.

The renewed focus on 'place' highlighted by sustainability and transformation plan footprints brings a range of opportunities for the NHS to directly influence, and benefit from, external decision-making and investments. With the local growth agenda driving new devolution plans across England, now is the time to align our roles in realising every place's potential.

"Becoming more involved in the local growth agenda is an important part of understanding, and influencing, the decisions and investment being made in your area."

Why engage in local growth plans?

Better understanding of the local growth agenda can bring the NHS several benefits, including:

- Access to significant external funding sources
- Greater influence in strategic local discussions
- Tailored workforce supply and transformation planning
- More integrated service provision
- Quicker access to innovative healthcare solutions.

The NHS – at the heart of an economy

In any economic area the NHS will be a significant player. Understanding the total value of the NHS to the local economy requires us to consider our work and reach across several areas:



The challenge for the NHS is to understand the value it brings to its local economy in the above areas. This value will differ across England, meaning that your focus should be on the areas where local partnerships can best be developed.

Your local leadership of growth

Responsibility for developing local economic plans rests with the 39 local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) in England, working closely with the emerging combined authorities and a range of other partners.

One of their key tasks is to develop a strategic economic plan (SEP) for their region, meaning every one of the 39 local economic areas in England has its own plan setting out the strengths and weaknesses of that particular economy and the chosen priorities for investment.

“LEPs and combined authorities want to work with the NHS to increase local productivity and prosperity. STPs present an ideal opportunity to bring together new economic partnerships for mutual benefit.”

Working to help you influence local economic planning

The NHS Confederation is the only national body helping NHS organisations to engage with their local leaders of growth – building partnerships with which to drive lasting improvements in public services for local communities.

Our NHS local growth advisor has worked with the national arm’s-length bodies, AHSNs, CCGs and the range of NHS trusts to bring tangible benefits to the NHS.

The NHS local growth advisor can support STP leads and NHS boards across England to:

- understand the background to local devolution plans and how to influence them
- review opportunities for potential partnership working with other public, private and third sector organisations around issues such as estates, workforce supply and retention, prevention and public health
- establish relationships with local economic leaders, including local and/or combined authorities and LEPs
- develop new metrics that record how we drive prosperity, in line with other sectors
- explore opportunities for NHS colleagues to take positions on non-health sector organisational boards, widening their local influence

For an informal conversation or to arrange a board-level discussion about how these services can bring direct local benefits, contact the NHS local growth advisor at Michael.Wood@nhsconfed.org or phone 020 7799 8668. Keep up to date at www.nhsconfed.org/localgrowth or by following @NHSLocalGrowth.

The NHS Confederation is the authentic voice of NHS leadership. We are the only membership body that brings together, and speaks on behalf of, the whole health and care system.