



3 March, 2021

## Members' Note on the National Voices 'Bill Group' set up to examine the Government White Paper on NHS reforms

The Government is proposing legislation to realise the aims it sets out to achieve in its White Paper [Integration and Innovation](#). Our very first reaction to the proposals is captured in this [blog](#).

In short, we are broadly supportive of the stated policy aim to break down barriers between health and social care, the NHS and local authorities, and to get to more place-based, holistic planning and delivery of services.

But we have reservations that the White Paper is curiously silent on an equally important shift - towards more accountability and coproduction with people, communities and their organisations. We argue that coproduction and accountability towards people and communities who need services needs to run like a golden thread through the Bill:

- It needs to start at neighbourhood level (where intelligence into how communities engage with services or how health is created or undermined will be at its most granular)
- And move through place (where commissioning relationships with the VCSE sector are most naturally held and strategic needs assessments need to be worked up in partnership with communities)
- And needs to be strategically supported and enhanced at ICS or system level, where population health management approaches can provide the necessary insight on a 'heat map' of community engagement and disadvantage.

To achieve this goal, we are in active conversation with the Bill team at the Department of Health and Social Care, and I am also representing our network at NHSE/I through a working group which will develop guidance on ICS. But we need to work together - we need the help and input from our members and their insight and expertise.

Last week, senior policy colleagues from across our coalition met to discuss what priorities we have for this process. We are now setting up a Bill Group which will ensure that we make ourselves easy to work with for system partners (and hard to

ignore). Please contact [eleanor.wright@nationalvoices.org.uk](mailto:eleanor.wright@nationalvoices.org.uk) if you or someone from your team wants to join this group.

If we don't shift the dial on better partnership working and coproduction we will also not make progress on other important objectives set out in the legislation: integration, prevention, person-centred restoration of services and, crucially, reducing health inequalities.

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