‘Vanguards’ to test ideas for radical redesign of NHS

Pilot sites will try three new models as part of the government's plan to integrate services

By Lisa Berry

HOSPITALS, GPs, community services and care homes are being brought together in England under a pilot scheme to test new approaches to working.

The 29 ‘vanguards’ were announced last month by NHS England chief executive Simon Stevens. The sites are intended to test in practice the overarching ideas set out last October in the NHS Five Year Forward View for changing the way services are organised. It emphasised the need for the NHS to work more closely with social care.

The pilot sites – the most innovative – were chosen from 269 submissions made by groups of clinicians including nurses and are backed by a £200 million ‘transformation fund’. From April they will test three new models: enhanced ‘transformation fund’. From April they will test three new models: enhanced

- joining up GP, hospital, community and mental health services.

Mr Stevens said: 'Instead of the usual top-down administrative tinkering, we’re backing radical care redesign by front line nurses, doctors and other staff - in partnership with their patients and local communities.

‘We're going to see distinctive solutions to shared challenges, which the whole of the NHS will be able to learn from.’

A number of the vanguards focus on care of older people, for example:

- Creating dedicated multidisciplinary teams for care homes, led by East and North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, comprising GPs, community psychiatric nurses, district nurses and geriatricians. They will form a rapid response service so homes have access to a combination of community nurses, matrons, therapists and home carers who can be deployed within 90 minutes if required.

- GPs in Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire coming together to take charge of a pooled budget to co-ordinate care between hospitals, care homes and ambulance services.

- Reducing hospital admissions for care home residents in Airedale, Yorkshire by better use of telemedicine.

- Providing one care record for frail patients with multiple comorbidities, such as diabetes, hypertension and angina, by integrating health and social care teams on the Fylde Coast in Lancashire.

- Addressing social isolation by supporting extra care housing residents in Wakefield, Yorkshire to resume hobbies after surgery, for example, walking after hip replacement.

Director of new models of care at NHS England and nurse Samantha Jones said the announcement was ‘one of the most exciting opportunities to support change to how health and care services are delivered for patients for a long time’.

Chief executive of the Care Quality Commission David Behan said: 'Health and adult social care should be designed around a person’s individual needs and not focused on organisational structures, as these do not represent the reality of experience.

‘As the regulator for health and adult social care, we support this vision for improvement.’

RCN chief executive Peter Carter said it was ‘good news’ that the plans set out in the Five Year Forward View were making ‘steady progress’.

‘RCN members look forward to seeing more detail about the individual sites, and how they might learn from their progress. The RCN is also keen to develop its role in this project, and to work with nursing leaders to ensure it meets the demands of a changing population, and a changing workforce,’ he said.

‘Front line staff are often the driving force behind successful innovation and change in the health and social care system, and it is vital that they are involved in the programme as it develops, along with patients and carers.’