

THE ROLE OF MONITOR

1. Introduction

Monitor has produced the attached leaflet to explain its role. It can also be found on Monitor's website at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/326396/About_Monitor_July_2014.pdf

Monitor is the sector regulator for health services in England. It is an executive non-departmental public body of the Department of Health.

Their responsibilities cover England and are to make sure

- independent NHS foundation trusts are well-led so that they can provide quality care on a sustainable basis
- essential services are maintained if a provider gets into serious difficulties
- the NHS payment system promotes quality and efficiency
- procurement, choice and competition operate in the best interests of patients

2. Monitor's Strategy

Monitor's Strategy 2014 -17, which is called, helping to redesign healthcare provision in England, has four cross-cutting themes. These are:

Paying more attention to provider capability.

The capabilities of provider organisations and their leaders will be more important than ever if they are to sustain the provision of high quality services in the face of a highly challenging and fast-changing environment. Therefore, we will pay more attention to the issue of provider capability, including providing support, alongside partner organisations as appropriate, to NHS foundation trusts – not just underperformers – to enhance their institutional and individual capabilities. We will focus in particular on the capabilities that drive long-term performance: strategic and business planning; organisational development; operational performance improvement; and individual leadership. We will also place more weight on the assessment of these capabilities at trusts seeking to demonstrate that they have achieved the foundation trust standard, although we will not do so in a way that raises the 'bar' that NHS trusts must clear to qualify as a foundation trust.

Balancing freedom to change and risk of failure.

Change and innovation require that local decision-makers are granted the freedom to get on and do their jobs. However, at a time when there is increasing attention being paid to the quality of care and when resources are scarce we must actively play our part in reducing the risk that failings go uncorrected for any significant period. Therefore, we are changing our approach to monitoring providers in order to minimise the burden we impose whilst also seeking to spot emerging problems as early as possible and to step in swiftly when we do. We will also keep under review

our toolkit of interventions so as to make sure they are as effective as possible given the resources available to us.

Making sure rules operate in the best interests of patients.

Monitor has responsibility for two sets of rules which are central to how the health sector operates: those governing the payment system and those governing procurement, patient choice and competition. In both areas we will work with partners to make sure these rules are aligned with the way the rest of the system operates and to ensure they are all designed and operated to incentivise behaviours that are in the best interests of patients. We will also work hard to make sure there is a good understanding of how to use the rules so that they are not an obstacle to doing the right thing for patients.

Joining up nationally and locally.

The new architecture of the NHS means that responsibilities are divided amongst many bodies. At Monitor we will reach out to and seek to work closely with our partner organisations, nationally and locally. This means, in particular, NHS England, the NHS Trust Development Authority, the Care Quality Commission, the Competition and Markets Authority, and the Department of Health. Not only must we work together collaboratively but we must have a common vision for what we're trying to achieve and a shared approach to how we will get there. In particular, we will seek to work with partners to take a health economy-wide approach to promoting change and fixing problems.

In the introduction to the strategy, they say:

[We are] committed to preserving the values that underpin a universal health service, free at the point of use. However, as the 'Call to Action' goes on to say, this will mean fundamental changes to how we deliver and use health and care services, not least by providing access to care that is much better integrated around the people who need it.

There is broad agreement about the general direction of change required. For example, it will mean breaking down traditional divisions between types of care provider – primary and secondary, physical and mental, health and social. It will mean doing less in hospitals, more outside. It will mean significant changes to primary care, including achieving greater scale. It will mean concentrating specialised services and developing new, sometimes radically different, models of general hospital care. And many patients will need to interact with the NHS in different ways.

3. Monitor's Quality Priorities

Monitor's quality priorities are:

Preventing serious quality problems arising

- We build the capability of trust boards and senior leaders to oversee quality
- We set clear standards of quality governance

- We do not authorise foundation status for trusts with poor quality care or inadequate quality governance

Detecting problems quickly

- We contribute to spotting quality problems through our 'Risk Assessment Framework'
- We work with partners to share intelligence that may be an early warning of problems, through regular communications at national level and local risk summits

Taking action promptly

- We use our enforcement powers to make sure quality problems are, once identified, fixed, placing trusts in special measures in the most serious cases
- We are explicit about the actions required to resolve quality problems and the timescales required to fix them
- We provide support and oversight to bring about change

The information in this brief outline of the role of Monitor has been drawn from Monitor's website, <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/monitor> where there is more detailed information.

Mike Lodge
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