

# Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock on proposals for a Health and Care Bill

Coronavirus has challenged our health and care system like never before. Our health and care staff have excelled at this time of crisis.

Just as we recognise their contribution, it is also vital we listen and act on changes that will support our NHS, integrated care, and lead to direct benefits for patients.

Over the past year, collaboration across health and social care has accelerated at a blistering pace. From setting up new hospitals in a matter of days to moving tens of thousands of appointments online, we've seen what we can do when we work together, flexibly, to adopt new technology focussed on the needs of the patient, and cast aside bureaucratic rules.

Today, I'm setting out our proposals for a Health and Care Bill, building on ideas first put forward by the NHS, so we can build on this progress, and shape a system that can better serve people in a fast-changing world.

First, our plans will cast aside the barriers that get in the way of a truly integrated system. Even before COVID this was needed, as our ageing population has more complex needs so this is more important than ever. Our plans will see different parts of the NHS joining up more seamlessly, and the NHS and local government working side by side to address long-term challenges, and deliver our manifesto commitments, including 50,000 more nurses and 40 new hospitals.

Second, we'll use legislation to bust bureaucracy that gets in the way of people doing their job. For example, the NHS will only need to tender services when it can lead to better outcomes for patients – rather than the current requirements that force them to spend time on competitive tendering even when it adds limited to no value. We want to leave clinicians with more time to focus on frontline care, and for leaders to keep driving the innovation we've seen throughout the pandemic.

Finally, our proposals will ensure NHS England, in a new combined form, is accountable to taxpayers that use it while maintaining its clinical and day-to-day operational independence.

The pandemic has shown the importance of levelling up the nation's health, and addressing the inequalities that coronavirus has laid bare. We have big plans to bring forward reforms in social care, public health and mental health, and these proposals will support this work and help us look to the decades ahead with confidence.

The measures in this [white paper](#) will put us all on a firmer footing for the

future. We must seize this opportunity to build back better.