

Speech: PM speech at NHS plan launch: 7 January 2019

Thank you Simon for giving us that overview of the NHS Long-Term Plan.

I am delighted to be here with you all on this exciting occasion – because it's one that truly marks a historic moment for patients across the nation.

And I am pleased that this plan is being launched here at Alder Hey – a hospital recognised for delivering world-class care. It's over one hundred years since Alder Hey first opened its doors to treat and improve the lives of our children. And much has changed since then.

Advances in healthcare – from vaccinations through to drug treatments – have dramatically improved young people's health.

But what has not changed is the extraordinary care and compassion of the hospital's staff.

Something I have just seen for myself on the general paediatric ward – where brave young children are treated with outstanding kindness and dedication, and of course first-class medical care.

And today, as we launch the Long-Term Plan here at Alder Hey – we are taking a big step to secure the future of our NHS for our children – and for their children.

Now I have always felt incredibly proud to live in a country with a health service that is there for all of us when we need it most. Free at the point of use. Based on clinical need and not the ability to pay, and there for us at every stage of our lives.

And at the very heart of our health service are its staff. Time and again, our doctors, nurses and other health professionals have demonstrated why the NHS stands shoulder to shoulder with the best in the world.

They are the reason why the NHS is one of this country's greatest institutions. An institution that is consistently what makes the people of this country most proud to be British.

As a government we have always recognised this unique importance of the NHS.

That's why in 2010, when we took office and had to deal with the record peacetime deficit we inherited, we prioritised the NHS with real terms increases in spending every year.

That money has delivered real improvements for patients.

But demand for NHS services continues to grow – and our health service faces increasing challenges from an ageing population with complex health needs. It

also needs to transform services and exploit the opportunities provided by new technologies.

NHS leaders told us that making the necessary changes in technology, workforce and infrastructure will take time and careful planning. That's why last year – in its 70th year – I committed to an ambitious funding proposal to help make the NHS fit for the future.

Not a one-off injection of cash. Not money to plug a gap or shore up a problem – but funding to protect the long-term future of the NHS.

Over the next five years – the NHS England budget will increase by £20.5 billion in real terms compared to today.

This commitment is possible because of our strong public finances, and because as we leave the EU and take back control of our money, we will no longer be sending vast annual sums to Brussels.

And crucially we have funded this commitment with no increase to people's taxes.

The NHS is the public's priority, and so I have made it my number one spending priority.

In return for this funding – because this is not just about money – I asked the NHS to draw up a long term plan, one that is clinically led and locally supported, with an absolute focus on cutting waste and ensuring every penny is well spent.

And as we have just heard from Simon – this is a plan that will set the vision for the NHS over the coming decade.

So together – the five-year funding settlement along with the ten-year plan – will provide both the certainty and long-term direction needed to transform patient care and secure the future of our NHS.

Now as Simon has just referenced, last June, I set out six priorities which I wanted to see central to the plan – and which I am pleased to see reflected today.

A more integrated health system that views health holistically – organising care around the physical, mental and social needs of the patient, and centring on what matters most to them.

A health service that focuses much more on prevention and early diagnosis in order to address the needs of an ageing population.

An emphasis on reducing variation between organisations across the NHS so that the world class care available to some reaches all parts of the country.

A service where the workforce are better supported and recognised as the lifeblood of our NHS.

And I wanted to see the NHS make greater use of technology, not only to make healthcare safer and more effective – but to make the most of exciting new possibilities and give you greater control over your own care. That means everything from being able to monitor conditions from the comfort of your home, to accessing your GP via your smartphone.

Finally, I wanted to see the NHS go further than ever before to ensure mental health gets the proper attention it deserves, putting it on a par with physical health.

So we are reshaping the NHS around the changing needs of patients today.

The Long-Term Plan delivers against each of these six priorities – and much more – with actions backed up by record investment.

And precisely because the plan is over 10 years, we can go much further on integrating care and embedding technology than we otherwise would have been able to.

But a plan is only as good as its delivery.

And ensuring its benefits are felt by patients will require strong leadership and front line support.

That means empowering the NHS workforce to deliver – encouraging leaders in each organisation to learn from the best and for the best to help others.

And while many hundreds of people have contributed to the plan's development, over the coming months a broader range of local NHS leaders and front line staff will need to shape how it is implemented across the country.

And I want to thank Baroness Dido Harding for leading on the workforce aspects of this.

Not everything can be done at once – so, as always, there will be some careful choices to make. But delivered effectively our Long-Term Plan for the NHS will secure our health service for generations to come.

Finally, I want to say a huge thank you to Simon Stevens, Ian Dalton, NHS staff, charities, voluntary groups and patients – and all those who have worked so hard, and contributed to this plan – as well as to Matt Hancock and his predecessor, Jeremy Hunt.

This is an historic moment. Our vision is clear. Our commitment is assured. So let's deliver the NHS of the future.