

Our priorities for 2023

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- Dr Jennifer Dixon DBE

Times are clearly very challenging. The NHS is under more pressure than I've seen in 40 years, with patients, their families and staff paying the price with their health. The story with social care is similar. And the health of some vulnerable communities is taking a particular hit from the cost of living hikes we're currently experiencing. This latest blow comes on top of the pandemic before it, austerity before that, not to mention economic 'insults' like the financial recessions. The cumulative impact seems overwhelming.

Taking action

It would be easy to be despondent. But organisations like the Health Foundation are in a position to help.

We are fortunate to have an endowment and we are independent. This enables us to take a step back and see a bigger picture. It also means we can take risks. Financial security enables us to take a longer term view.

We also have a voice, and hopefully you will have seen more of our work in the national media.

With this comes responsibility – to focus on the right things, bring others with us, and ensure our work has an impact. Given the thicket of needs and challenges all fighting for attention, strategic focus is key. As is balancing the amount of attention we pay to the medium and longer term, as well as to today.

A refreshed strategy

Going forward, we have three strategic priorities:

1. improving people's health and reducing inequalities;

2. supporting radical innovation and improvement in health and care services; and
3. providing evidence and analysis to improve health and care policy.

Improving health because life expectancy improvements are stalling and going into reverse in some communities, particularly those living in socioeconomically deprived areas. Much of this is avoidable. Radical innovation and improvement in care because a combination of a (global) shortage of labour in the health and care workforce, and an increasing burden of morbidity in the population largely due to aging means that care must change radically and faster. There is simply no choice. And improving policy and policymaking? Well, the rationale for that should be obvious.

More detail is spelt out in [our new strategy covering 2023–25](#). In each of the three areas we have a range of activities, from grant making, research, and fellowships, to collaborating with stakeholders and working in partnership.

Work to watch out for in 2023

I'm particularly excited about the new campaigning initiative we are supporting, [Health Equals](#), which will launch its first campaign in spring 2023. This is a collaboration with many other national organisations to raise public consciousness about the extent and nature of health inequality and what to do about it.

Building on [our recent review](#), we will continue to explore how to improve health and tackle health inequalities in Scotland.

And following last year's popular [REAL Challenge lecture given by Andy Haldane](#), we will be working with the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) on the health of the working age population and how to improve it.

I'm also excited to see how [Thiscovery](#) – a new spinout company from the Foundation-funded [THIS Institute](#) – will be used to rapidly crowdsource rigorous qualitative evidence across health care. This will surely help to speed up the testing and effective spread of innovations in care that we know are sorely needed.

And in this likely pre-election year, I'm also keen to see how policy ideas about reforming care will develop based on our research and influence. One area of focus here is the future of primary care, and another is on how our health system really does compare internationally, which we will be working on with colleagues at OECD.

Cross-cutting themes

Internally, our priority is to develop the Foundation as an organisation – our people, operational and business processes, and our infrastructure. And across our external and internal priorities there are three vital cross-cutting themes.

The first is environmental sustainability. Among other things we are using our responsible investment policy and our endowment to leverage more progress.

The second is equity, diversity and inclusion – making this a focus across our external work, but also making progress internally too, for example in developing a more inclusive culture.

And the third is public participation – reaching out more to the communities and groups we ultimately are here to serve, to make sure their experience and perspective more fully influences the work we do.

Ways you can get involved

Over the next few months look out for blogs from the directors responsible for each of the Health Foundation's priority areas, drilling down into the detail of our plans for 2023.

We value all our stakeholders and encourage you all to engage with us. Our annual guide to [funding and opportunities in the coming year](#), included in this month's newsletter, lists the many ways you can get involved in our work and gives more information about some of the initiatives I've mentioned above. In particular, don't forget our regular [webinars](#) and [monthly podcasts](#), where we'll be covering the hot issues of the year ahead.

Join us – the times demand it, don't they?

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This content originally featured in our email newsletter, which explores perspectives and expert opinion on a different health or health care topic each month.

<https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/blogs/our-priorities-for-2023>