

STPs

Be Informed

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Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) are area-based five-year plans for health and care services in England. There are 44 STPs in total.

STPs have been produced by new regional partnerships of NHS providers, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), local authorities and other health and care services. They will shape current and future health and care services in your area.

Some main themes in the plans are:

- Acute sector reconfigurations (e.g. hospital mergers)
- Primary/community care development
- Prevention, self-management and ageing well
- Multi-disciplinary and rapid response teams.

STPs should be involving staff through unions and professional bodies, but so far, this hasn't happened. The CSP has helped to produce guidance as part of the Social Partnership Forum¹ promoting the need for staff engagement at a national, regional and local level.

Why are they so important?

The plans propose big changes to health and care services in each part of England, so it is likely these will affect you directly.

Just under half the plans specifically mention physiotherapy or allied health professions. On the whole, this is in the context of expanding services in general practice and primary care more widely.

There's no mention of cuts to physiotherapy services, but this might be because they are strategic documents with implementation plans still to come – you and your colleagues are best placed to understand the implications of the proposals for your area.

The CSP wants to help ensure the voice of the profession is heard by STPs. Here's why:

- They might lead to service expansion or an increased risk of cuts
- They could result in organisational change
- They will influence staffing and training numbers
- Physiotherapy services need to be integral to plans, not added as an afterthought.

¹The Social Partnership Forum brings together NHS Employers, NHS Trade Unions, NHS England, Health Education England (HEE), NHS Improvement and the Department of Health to look at workforce implications of policy. www.socialpartnershipforum.org/priority-areas/supporting-system-change/

What is the CSP's view?

The CSP agrees that to meet the needs of the public and be sustainable, the health and care system needs to change to be more preventative and rehabilitative.

STPs have the potential to be a force for good, helping us to integrate and co-ordinate hugely complex local health and care systems. We are seeing some of the early benefits of this type of joint work in Greater Manchester. However, the central issue of funding cannot be dodged - no system, however good, can be the whole answer if funding is inadequate. The case for engagement is clear – better engagement, particularly with the people delivering services, results in better outcomes.

Speaking up for your profession and patients

- Read the STP for your area www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-38838852
- Consider how it could affect your patients and your work
- Find out who can help you influence locally – is there a clinical lead or trade union link?
- Look for opportunities to get involved – are aspects of your area plan open to consultation?
Are STP leads looking for answers or solutions you can help with?
- Discuss the plan with your managers or team.

Working together in the CSP

- Share your findings to help us build a picture of what STPs mean for physiotherapy
- Alert the CSP if there are things we need to respond to – opportunities or threats
- Discuss the plans for your region with other CSP members through your English Regional Network
- If you are a steward talk to other unions and raise it at your local staff side.

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THE CHARTERED SOCIETY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY is the professional, educational and trade union body for the United Kingdom's 56,000 chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and support workers.