

## **Reimagining the relationship between universities and the NHS – briefing for roundtable attendees February 2021**

### **Background**

The relationship between our universities and NHS organisations is one of the oldest, strongest and most valuable local partnerships we have. Across every part of the UK, these institutions have worked closely over many years to help make their populations both better and better off – developing a world-class clinical workforce, translating medical innovations into practice and understanding how to help us live longer, healthier lives.

The emerging focus on rebalancing the economy is causing anchor institutions such as universities and NHS organisations to explore their wider impact in the local economy and to better understand the role and responsibilities they have to support their communities. With universities and the NHS playing a leading role in the clinical, economic, cultural and social response to COVID-19, now is the time to revisit this relationship and to ask whether new forms of collaboration and values based on place-based leadership are needed.

### **Work to date**

The Civic University Network and the NHS Confederation held an initial [webinar](#) on 30 November 2020 to explore some of the emerging leadership issues that bind the two sectors. In particular, the webinar highlighted:

- issues of stark health and wealth inequality which haven't been successfully tackled previously and have now been made worse by COVID-19;
- the need for strong relationship building and 'sticky edges' between sectors, trust and tangible outcomes;
- the importance of a thriving voluntary and community sector;
- the breadth and diversity of both the university sector and the NHS and the need to refresh our understanding of how to maximise the relationship; and
- the need to think 'glocally', with this relationship acting as both a social safety net and an economic springboard.

### **Next steps**

The Civic University Network and the NHS Confederation are arranging three leadership roundtables in March and April 2021, which will explore set themes around place; the changing health and care environment; and effective collaboration and leadership. The learning from these roundtables will help determine how we can collectively:

- co-produce a set of principles for how universities and the NHS can work together locally to maximise their collective benefits to society and the economy.

- influence forthcoming national policy and legislation to formally embed the principles for a reimagined university – NHS relationship. This will include discussions about the role of universities in the emerging Integrated Care Systems and provider collaborations and the delivery of the UK R&D Roadmap.
- ensure that the university – NHS relationship is at the heart of national parallel sector discussions about the role and reach of anchor institutions and, collectively, the government’s levelling up agenda.

The early conclusions from the leadership roundtables will be presented for discussion at the annual Civic University Network Conference in May and the NHS Confederation Annual Conference in June, with an expected formal publication in the autumn.

Chairing this programme of work will be Dame Jackie Daniel, CEO, Newcastle-upon-Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Vice-Chairs are Professor Shirley Congdon, Vice-Chancellor, University of Bradford, and Professor Steven West, Vice-Chancellor, UWE (Bristol).

### **More information**

To discuss this work in more detail please contact:

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#### **About the Civic University Network**

The Civic University Network was one of the key recommendations from the UPP Foundation’s Civic University Commission, an independent inquiry into the future of the civic universities and how they can best serve their ‘place’ in the 21st century. The Network will work to support the growing civic university movement so that universities can increase their civic impact - and connect universities with other sectors which are prioritising issues around ‘place’ to level up the economy and society.

<https://civicuniversitynetwork.co.uk/>

#### **About the NHS Confederation**

The NHS Confederation is the membership body that brings together and speaks on behalf of organisations that plan, commission and provide NHS services in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. It represents hospitals, community and mental health providers, ambulance trusts, primary care networks, clinical commissioning groups and integrated care systems.

<https://www.nhsconfed.org/>