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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **NHS must learn from the best to level up the rest**

*A report by the Medical Technology Group (MTG) reveals the best performing NHS regions in the country, with some hospitals in the southwest and northeast treating up to three times as many patients as those in London and the Midlands.*

The NHS has to use its best performing regions as a model to help struggling regions level up their quality of care, says a new report by the MTG.

Looking at patient referral data from NHS England between July 2021 and March 2022 for all completed pathways, as well as specialised treatment areas including general surgery, cardiology and orthopaedics, the MTG found that CCGs in the northeast, southwest and pockets of the north consistently performed better than those in London and the Midlands.

Now the group has published a set of recommendations and case studies urging NHS leaders to learn from those using innovation and the latest technology to level up the quality of care across the country.

MTG Chair Barbara Harpham has now urged Therese Coffey and her department to review the report and implement its recommendations, after it was reported the new health secretary questioned why all hospitals can't match the best performers in the country:

*'The pandemic has placed unprecedented pressure on hospitals across the country. Yet, amid the health service's greatest test, certain regions have responded well and risen to the challenges using innovation and innovative thinking to bring down waiting lists, provide patient focused treatment and make more efficient use of NHS spending.*

*"We welcome the new health secretary's interest in setting clear expectations through the best performing hospitals in the country. The purpose of this report is to champion those precise examples of success in the NHS in the hope they can be used to help*

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*underperforming regions. As our report shows, some of the best examples of modern healthcare exist in the UK, but the system is not doing enough to ensure these models are scaled out. Doing so will ensure everyone in the country can access this world class level of NHS care no matter where they live.*

NHS Wakefield, the top performing CCG, on average treated up to three times as many patients per 1,000 as the bottom ten between March 2021 and July 2022. Responding to the report, Len Richards, Chief Executive at Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust, said:

*“The Shared Referral Pathway has been integral to our approach to supporting patients in Wakefield and the North Kirklees area. It has allowed primary and secondary care to work closely to support patients and our local population, ensuring that a timely intervention with the best available treatment, care and support is achievable. This has been a clinically-led innovation, using existing technology in new ways allowing us to focus on what is best for the patient and our local population.*

*“However, this is not something that has happened overnight. Implementing this change has been a two year journey with its own trials and tribulations and has required commitment and support from hundreds of clinicians alongside many operational, technical and programme team members. There is still a great deal more that we can do, by using this as the platform to continue improving collaboration between areas of the healthcare system to further support patients and clinicians. We fully support the MTG’s call for the government and NHS England to do more to facilitate the sharing of best practice across the NHS. By working together, the new devolved ICS regions can ensure that every patient in the country receives the best care possible.”*

As well as variation between different regions of the country, the report also found local variation within the newly created ICSs that replaced CCGs from July this year. This means that some of the best and worst performing CCGs, for example Wakefield (1st) and Leeds (83rd) are now part of the same West Yorkshire and Harrogate ICS.

The report follows the Medical Technology Group’s 2017 study which found the NHS postcode lottery was ‘alive and well’, with stark variation in access to certain types of treatment across the country.

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With the new ICS system up and running, the group has now published a list of recommendations for government, NHS England and local NHS bodies to ensure that best practice is shared more widely across the health service.

Examples of this include:

### **Data technology in Wakefield**

NHS Wakefield, the top performing CCG, on average treated up to three times as many patients per 1,000 as the bottom ten between March 2021 and July 2022.

By using digital technology to join up primary and secondary care, Wakefield CCG was able to set up a 'Shared Referral Pathway'. This means doctors can communicate with each other about the patient as they move through the pathway - optimising their treatment and avoiding unnecessary appointments.

### **Backlog busting orthopaedic care in Bury**

Same day 'Super Saturday' initiatives have utilised medical technology to provide intensive surgical clinics that can treat record numbers of patients.

### **General surgery and collaboration in South Tyneside**

A 'Path to Excellence' programme has seen hospitals collaborate across the region, identifying the top achievers in diagnosis and surgery. This results in patients receiving specialised care and sees them move faster through the system with lower levels of delayed or cancelled operations.

### **Leadership in Northumbria**

A culture of 'high standards' in the sixth best performing CCG saw the hospital executive meet with the surgery and Infection Prevention Control (IPC) team every day to ensure they

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were supported. The leadership team has also supported the use of data to foresee challenges consistently engaging with clinical colleagues on how to overcome them.

The full report, infographic and video can be found at: [mtg.org.uk/campaigns/1429-2](https://mtg.org.uk/campaigns/1429-2)

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## **Methodology**

Between July 2021 to March 2022 Monthly Referral to Treatment (RTT) data for total completed pathways and selected treatment areas was analysed by the MTG.

The data used was the total number of completed admitted pathways and selected treatment areas within the relevant month. To understand the relative increase of productivity across CCGs, the number of patients treated per 1,000 of the population was calculated.

## **About the Medical Technology Group**

The Medical Technology Group (MTG) is a coalition of patient groups, research charities and medical device manufacturers working to make medical technologies available to everyone who needs them. Uptake of medical technology in the UK is not as good as it should be, given its great potential to provide value for money to the NHS, patients and taxpayers. The MTG believes that patients and clinicians need better information about medical technologies so that they can make informed choices about their medical care.

[www.mtg.org.uk](https://www.mtg.org.uk)