



South West London  
**Academic Health and Social Care**  
Network

Working together to improve  
**South West Londoners'**  
health and wellbeing



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## Reference

<sup>1</sup>Healthcare for London: A Framework for Action. Professor the Lord Darzi of Denham KBE. July 2007

<sup>2</sup>High quality care for all: NHS Next Stage Review final report. Professor the Lord Darzi of Denham KBE. June 2008.

<sup>3</sup>NHS London Strategic Plan. March 2008

<sup>4</sup>Healthcare for London: Consulting the Capital. November 2007

# Summary

NHS London and Healthcare for London advocate that people in London should receive the best possible health and social care<sup>1,3,4\*</sup>. Against this background, in early 2008, leading experts proposed that South West London's NHS, social care and universities should come together to create an Academic Health and Social Care Network (AHSN): a unique model of working that aims to improve patient and client care and public health, specifically addressing the needs of the local population in South West London.

The proposal creates a new, inclusive model of collaboration between the NHS and the universities. Managed by a Partnership Board, the AHSN aims to focus on three key areas – **research, service, and education and training** – underpinned by **building research capacity, and developing excellent integrated education for health and social care change.**

In the summer of 2008 a consultation review was commissioned to test the feasibility of developing the AHSN. The review also measured the potential commitment of future AHSN members in South West London's Primary Care Trusts, Acute Trusts, Mental Health Trusts, other NHS organisations, social care and academic institutions.

\*references on inner front cover



## The outcome

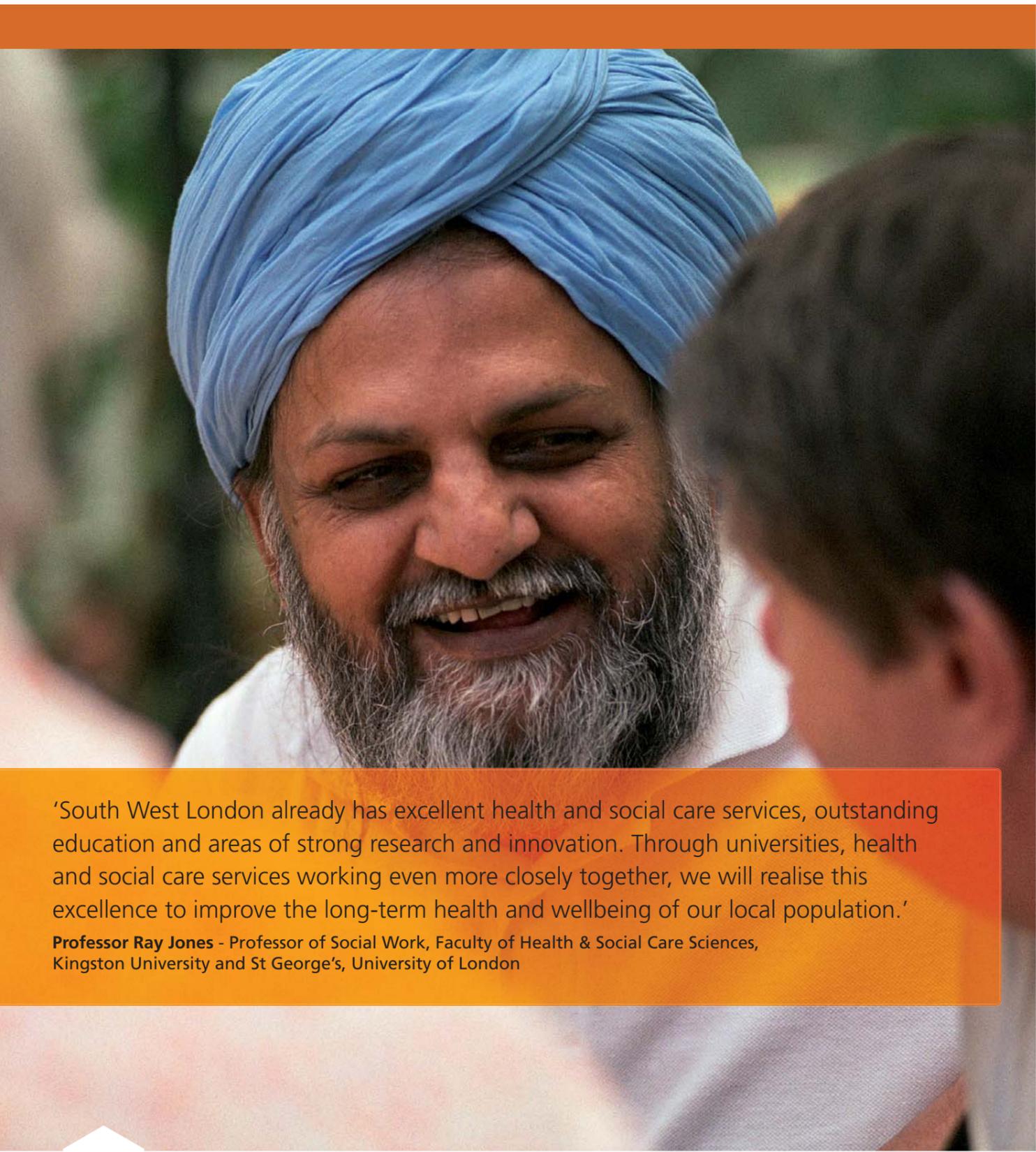
The proposal received an extremely positive overall response. The new emerging Network model underlines the fact that high-quality service provision needs to be informed by relevant, quality research.

The AHSN has consulted extensively with its potential membership to identify six strategic themes around which the Network will initially operate: Stroke; Early Years; Infection; Boundaries; Recovery and Implementing New Patterns of Care. Work relating to these themes, including major research projects and smaller locally driven innovations, will be used to drive forward the AHSN agenda.

All AHSN-generated research will be evaluated and the findings disseminated locally and nationally. Strategically linking research, service and education will practically generate positive health and social change in SW London. Research will help anticipate health challenges and the subsequent training requirements needed by health professionals to make them 'fit for purpose' in the 21st century.

To date, the Network has uniquely achieved buy-in from Primary Care Trusts, Acute Trusts and Mental Health Trusts, Social Care and other NHS organisations such as London Ambulance Service. It is working with the third sector and industry.

This prospectus outlines how the newly established AHSN will operate and what you, as a member, can expect to gain from being part of this groundbreaking, collaborative network. We urge you to read it and to add your expertise and innovation to future health and social care provision in South West London. By working together we can improve the health and wellbeing of the whole population.



‘South West London already has excellent health and social care services, outstanding education and areas of strong research and innovation. Through universities, health and social care services working even more closely together, we will realise this excellence to improve the long-term health and wellbeing of our local population.’

**Professor Ray Jones** - Professor of Social Work, Faculty of Health & Social Care Sciences, Kingston University and St George's, University of London

# Introduction

## From the South West London Academic, Health and Social Care Network sponsors

The AHSN is a new, pioneering membership network of organisations spanning health, social care and higher education, and working with the third sector and industry. Its mission is to provide world-class health and social care services to people living in South West London. This will be achieved by the Network's members working together to develop and share evaluated best practice in health and social care.

### The vision

The AHSN's strategic objective is to deliver real and measurable positive health and social care change, especially in disadvantaged communities. This will:

- Ensure local and rapid access to health and social care
- Tackle poverty and disadvantage, thereby addressing health inequalities

The Network will achieve this through locally driven project work within a context of interdisciplinary strategic themes (see pages 11-12 for strategic themes). The end goal is for the AHSN to:

- Ensure that **research informs changes** in health and social care practice
- **Educate** the whole health and social care workforce about positive change that is founded in proven research
- Assure that **best practice** learnt in one environment is **implemented** in all relevant areas of SW London

We anticipate that the AHSN's strategic approach will result in successful applications for national and London-wide agendas to support local improvements.

As a part of the AHSN, member organisations will be involved in improving the health and wellbeing of the whole population and have access to the entire Network's expertise and innovation. We hope that you will join us in working together to improve SW Londoners' health and wellbeing.

### The AHSN is committed to delivering:

- Practical local work and projects through local networks
- National and London-wide agendas across SW London through a central office and local commitment

**David Astley,**  
Chief Executive,  
St George's  
Healthcare NHS Trust

**Professor Ray Jones,** Professor of Social Work, Faculty of Health & Social Care Sciences, Kingston University and St George's, University of London

**Professor Peter Kopelman,** Principal, St George's, University of London

**Ann Radmore,** Chief Executive, NHS Wandsworth

**Judy Wilson,** Chief Executive, South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust

# Why the need for a South West London AHSN?

London is the leading centre for health research in Britain, supporting 50 per cent of the country's biomedical research. The capital also educates 30 per cent of the country's healthcare students and, as such, London should be at the cutting edge of medicine and social care development.

However, London lacks the appropriate infrastructure to enable its patients to fully benefit from the latest scientific breakthroughs the capital has to offer. The AHSN's 2008 feasibility review revealed that, apart from within St George's Healthcare NHS Trust and St George's, University of London, there is little knowledge or understanding of the areas of excellence in research in SW London by health and social care service professionals.

There is even less understanding of how new research could be influenced by the health and social care services. For this to happen, it is essential for health services and universities in London to work together strategically on agreed priorities. Through organised collaboration, researchers, academics and health and social care professionals will be able to focus on creating, developing and delivering treatments and services tailored to the needs of people in London and, specifically, SW London.

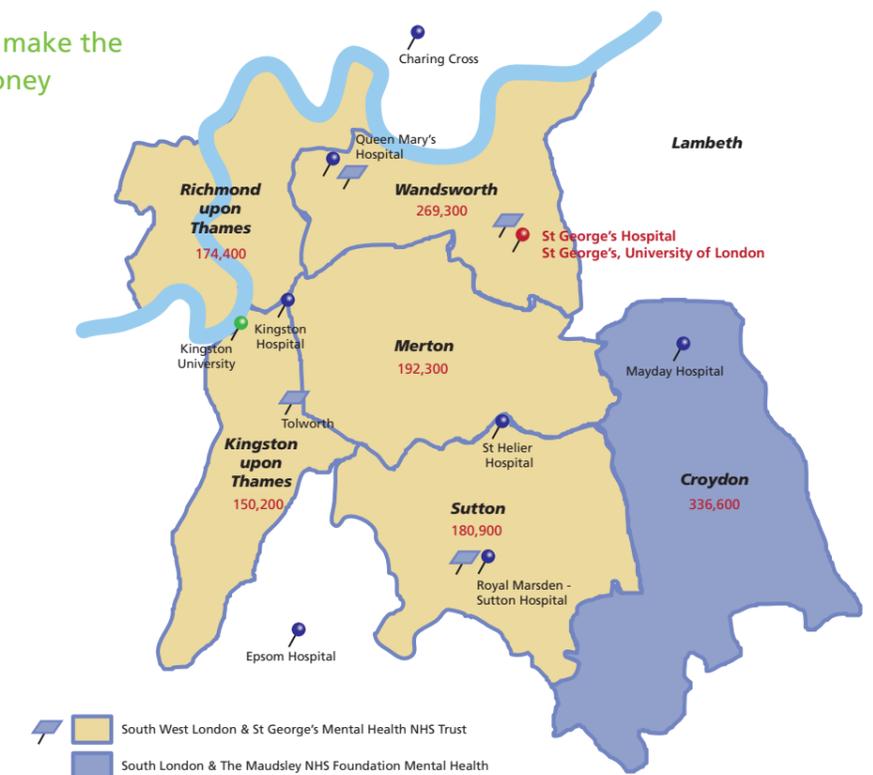
## Facts about South West London:

- More than 1.3 million people live in the area
- Nearly 6,000 health and social care students are currently attending universities in SW London
- Biomedical and other health and social care research is undertaken at St George's, University of London and Kingston University

## Why is the SW London AHSN needed?

- There is a real need to improve Londoners' health and wellbeing
- The NHS and social care is not meeting Londoners' expectations<sup>1\*</sup>
- London suffers big inequalities in health and healthcare<sup>2\*</sup>
- There is a need for more specialised care in London<sup>3\*</sup>
- London's workforce and buildings are not being used effectively<sup>4\*</sup>
- There is an obligation to make the best use of taxpayers' money

\*references on inner front cover



# Benefits of becoming an AHSN member

At an AHSN workshop in September 2008, potential SW London AHSN members were asked: 'What can your organisation get from being a member of the Academic Health Sciences Network?' Here are some of the responses:

## **The benefits of a world-class network:**

'Shaping the developments of the network for mutual gains and benefits'

'New opportunities'

'Less rivalry and more collaboration'

'A secure future for healthcare in South West London'

'Leverage for new funding'

'Goodwill, good reputation and bigger market share'

'Some protection from future hazards'

## **Efficient cross-sector communication:**

'Improved communication between services'

'Tapping into research expertise more widely'

'Strategic links between health and social care providers for integrated commissioning of education'

'Clear, coherent support for a research agenda leading to access to relevant clinical populations and service providers'

'Access to a broad range of expertise in service management, teaching and research'

## **The benefits of strategically targeted research:**

'Broader, locally relevant research activity'

'Links between service redesign and workforce educational pathways, allowing universities to respond swiftly to change'

'Improved reputation by raising standards, especially in research and teaching'

## **Supporting an integrated workforce:**

'Better workforce planning'

'Improved workforce quality, recruitment and satisfaction'

'Fit-for-purpose workforce. Definition/measurement and tracking of quality'

## **Providing best practice for optimum service outcomes:**

'Better patient care'

'Opportunity to be part of a broad culture of service improvement'

'Enhanced service quality and hence patient experience'



# What will the AHSN deliver?

The SW London AHSN is a practical vehicle that will benefit its members and, ultimately, patients and the public. By being a member of the Network, you and your organisation are making a commitment to excellence in health and social care service provision to patients in SW London.

In return, the AHSN is committed to delivering positive, proven, health and social care change through locally driven project work within a context of inter-disciplinary strategic themes (See pages 12 and 13 for strategic themes).

'All AHSN member organisations will be involved in improving the health and wellbeing of the population of SW London. This can be effectively achieved through each and every member having access to the whole Network's expertise and innovation.'

Ann Radmore - Chief Executive, Wandsworth NHS

## The SW London AHSN is committed to delivering the following:

### Key deliverable - Service

The Network will build links between health and social services, and research and education by developing strong, comprehensive networks of:

- Health and social care professions and other groups across the Network
- Constituent membership organisations within borough boundaries areas

### Key deliverable - Education and training

The AHSN will create a platform for workforce planning that will anticipate likely training requirements for health and social care professionals. The AHSN will strengthen links and act as an anchor for the development of educational and training programmes, ensuring partnership between health, social care and universities.

### Key deliverable - Research

The communication and effectiveness of local research will be improved by:

- Identifying and publicising the areas of collaborative research strengths in SW London to all health and social care providers in the sector
- Developing and implementing plans, both within the universities and the health and social care service, to align research towards these areas of inter-disciplinary strengths

## These key deliverables will be achieved by adhering to the following principles:

### From hypotheses to patient to public

The AHSN will use strategic themes to deliver service and professional training change through:

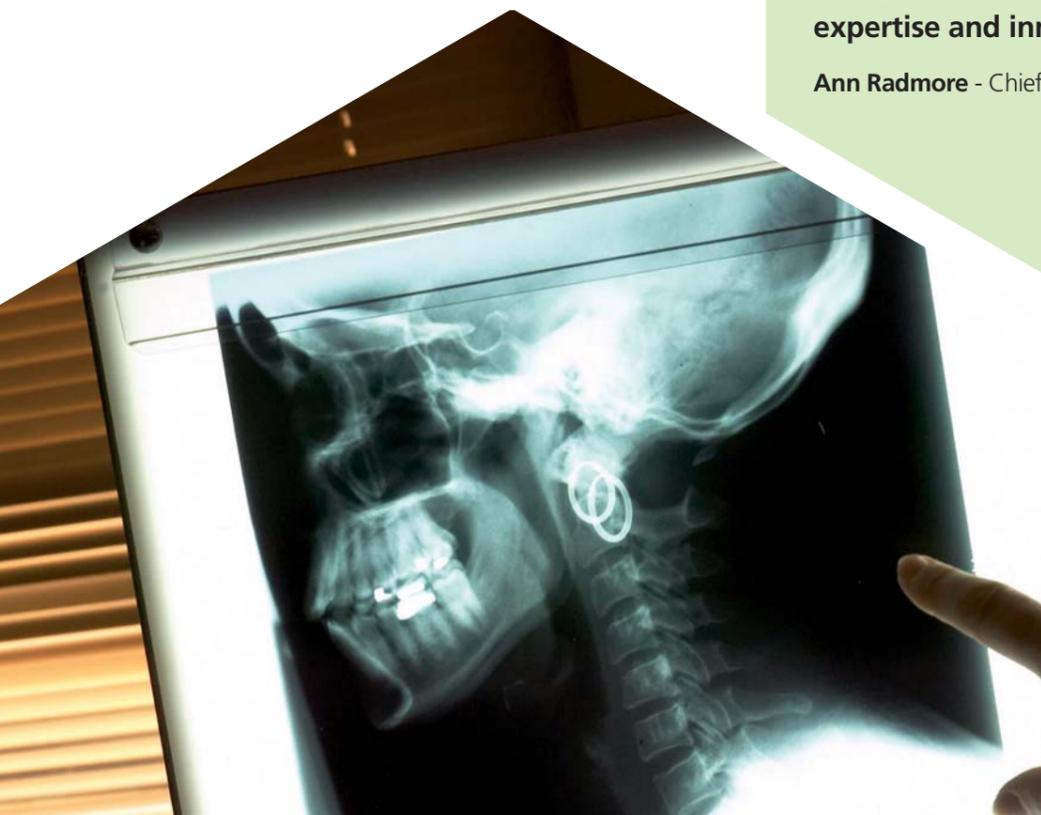
- Targeting local research and innovation to the service needs of SW London
- Looking at innovation from other geographical, service and research areas and ensuring that the best practice flows rapidly into service delivery in social care and health
- Applying them to professional training

### Building research capacity

Research capacity will be extended to enable professionals and other groups within the health and social care service to undertake their own research and/or contribute to the research of others.

### Education for health and social care change

The AHSN will bring together health and social care services to identify key areas of necessary change in practice, agree priorities and develop new education. Where appropriate, new or adapted roles will be developed which are common across a substantial area and/or a number of organisations.



# Working strategically



The AHSN has consulted extensively with its potential membership to identify six strategic themes around which the Network will work for the first three years.

## Two categories of themes have been identified:

- **Specific** - Stroke, Early Years and Infection
- **General** - Boundaries, Recovery and Implementing New Patterns of Care

Work relating to these themes, including major research projects and smaller locally driven innovations, will be used to drive forward the AHSN agenda. Individuals, groups, professional groups or organisational areas of interest and priority may fit into several different themes.

All projects will be written up and evaluated. While multiple projects will be delivered locally in partnership, the key objective is for outcomes to be disseminated across SW London and nationally.

During the consultation process work was undertaken to identify possible projects around these themes.



# AHSN planned projects

An AHSN stakeholder meeting in January 2009 explored how the Network could practically generate positive health and social change in SW London. It became clear that linking research, service and education was key to the Network's success.

## **Three things need to be in place to generate health and social care change:**

- A clear way of specifying projects, which is understood by all and readily implemented
- An effective model of evaluation, which is readily implemented in a variety of settings including a generic template for new models of care
- A plan for ensuring local and national dissemination



Some initial projects which require cross-organisational working have been identified. Examples include:

**Theme: Early years**

Incidents of infant immunisation and breastfeeding are low in London.

**Project:** Review the factors which influence mothers and explore how influence can be applied to generate change.

**Theme: Infection**

The over prescribing and/ or inappropriate prescription of antibiotics in hospital and community has contributed to the increase in drug-resistant pathogens that are the scourge of modern healthcare.

**Project:** Review the patterns of antibiotic usage in SW London including primary care and hospital prescriptions and patient perception of need. Identify the most effective way to facilitate change.

**Theme: Stroke**

There is evidence that understanding the needs of stroke patients, their families and carers is inconsistent throughout the stroke pathway.

**Project:** Review good practice within the sector and elsewhere. Prospectively evaluate the roles of professionals who care for stroke patients along the entire pathway, and adherence to stroke standards. Identify the most effective way to enable all professionals to deliver best practice.

**Theme: Recovery**

SW London and Surrey Trauma Network will be established in 2010. There has been a focus on the acute phase of trauma. Recovery after trauma is key to the cost-effective delivery of an integrated healthcare pathway.

**Project:** Review current evidence to uncover what is needed, and where, across health and social care.

**Theme: Implementing new models of care**

New patient pathways and settings, including in social care, have recently been introduced.

**Project:** Review roles and responsibilities of all professionals. Identify, develop and evaluate necessary new roles, or learning needs, of current professionals which are common across a substantial area/number of organisations to ensure that service users receive an improved quality of care. Mental health is identified as a starting point.

**Theme: Boundaries**

Currently, access to library resources depends on an individual worker's employer. For example, occupational therapists employed by social care, primary care, secondary/tertiary care, mental health, or a university in SW London have completely different access to journals and library services.

**Project:** Work together to provide common access.



**Criteria for AHSN projects**

Any project which is conducted under the AHSN umbrella will have:

- A clear specification
- An evaluation of the potential impact
- A means of evaluating any findings
- A plan for ensuring that findings can be disseminated locally and nationally



‘As a result of the AHSN’s work, health and social care **knowledge** will be collated and disseminated to influence health and social care policy and practice.’

**Professor Peter Kopelman** - Principal, St George’s, University of London

# Membership

‘A membership network of organisations across health, social care and universities in South West London can deliver outstanding service with minimal development costs if we work together using practical service ideas, pro bono resources and all members’ enthusiasm to deliver change.’

**David Astley** - Chief Executive, St George’s Healthcare NHS Trust

## The South West London AHSN will have a two-tier membership structure:

### i) Full membership

As a full member of the AHSN your organisation will:

- Have a seat on the Board
- Help agree key strategic themes to be reviewed on a tri-annual basis
- Develop AHSN’s strategy
- Agree an annual business plan and priorities

### ii) Associate members and affiliate members

Affiliate members will not be members of the Board but will:

- Be closely involved in the work of the AHSN
- Have access to the AHSN intranet
- Be party to bids for funding

### Fees

All member organisations are asked to:

- Commit to pay a membership fee for three years in the first instance to help initial funding of the network. This will allow a sufficient time for real achievements to be made and for individual partner organisations to realise benefits, before major renegotiations for funding have to be undertaken.
- Contribute to the work of the Network by way of staff time and pro bono resources for such things as meeting rooms

Associate and affiliate members will be able to join the AHSN for a reduced fee.

### Principles of working for members

Collaborative working requires mutual professional respect and understanding. All members of the AHSN will be asked to adhere to some basic principles of working:

**Acknowledge** that all partners are autonomous organisations.

**Accept** that an individual organisation working in partnership may not always receive immediate direct benefit from work that is for the common good.

**Recognise** that, for an organisation to be involved, there will at some stage need to be a perceived benefit to that organisation.

**Accept** that, on occasion, an organisation may not wish to be part of some aspect of the work.

**Accept** that organisations may at the same time be in competition and working collaboratively. Partners will agree, with honesty, as to where the boundaries of competition and mutual self-interest fall.

# How will the AHSN be governed?

The AHSN will be jointly hosted by St George's, University of London, St George's Healthcare NHS Trust, NHS Wandsworth and South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust. These organisations will be party to a Memorandum of Association, and will be responsible and accountable for matters of finance and the Network's over-arching vision.

## Overall management: The Partnership Board

Overall management of the AHSN will be through a Partnership Board. Board membership will comprise a director-level member from each organisation that has full AHSN membership. Each Board member will take on an identified role within the Network and will lead on that aspect of the work.

There will be Joint Chairs of the Board, from the health, social service, or the university sectors. The health or social service Chair will be an NHS Chief Executive or a Director of Social Services. The University Chair will be a Principal or Vice-Chancellor.

The remaining Board membership will comprise of:

- Chairs of Borough Groups and Chairs of professional groups
- Chair of the Service Users' Group
- A student representative

Organisations with associate membership will link to the Board through a Borough Group Chair. Any professional groups without a seat on the Board will be linked to an identified member of the Board to ensure that all professions are effectively linked into the Network.

## Day-to-day delivery

### The Central Office

Office space is being provided by St George's, University of London. Equipment to support the running of the membership network and the human resources infrastructure is being provided by St George's Healthcare NHS Trust and NHS Wandsworth.

### The Core Executive Team

A small, expert executive team will run the Network's day-to-day operations:

**Director:** A critical success factor for any partnership organisation is the provision of strong leadership. This Board member will work with Chief Executives and senior academics across universities, NHS and social care, to deliver outputs.

**Communications:** Excellent communication across organisations and cultures is key to the Network's success. An experienced communications expert will work to ensure that information is widely available and accessible, and that members can continue to influence the Network.

**Finance and administration:** High level financial and administrative personnel will, in time, support the Network.

**Other staffing needs:** As needs occur, staff will either be recruited pro bono from the membership and/or funded from project or programme grant income.

### Role of the Central Office

The central office will:

- Coordinate and inform the Network
- Support the submission of relevant national and London-wide bids, working with others

- Manage an effective communications strategy, including: regularly updating AHSN activity on an AHSN website to ensure learning is shared; occasional events; producing an Annual Report

- Provide basic administrative support for the Chairs of Networks and Borough Groups, including maintaining membership lists and agreeing agendas.

### Other routes of AHSN work delivery

**Existing networks** - The objectives of the AHSN will additionally be delivered through existing professional and health/social care networks. An initial task for the AHSN will be to review these networks and identify ways in which the AHSN can interlock with them. The AHSN will also create new networks and revitalise any that are not working effectively.

**Patients, carers and service users** - Patients, carers and service users are essential partners in the AHSN. The Network will engage current groups of patients, carers and service users in boroughs, the NHS and universities. Members of these groups will be involved in Borough Groups and/or a Service Users' Group to ensure that users' views are properly reflected in the work. The Network will make equality a key driver for the

organisation. A service user will be a member of the Board (as Chair of the Service Users' Group).

**Borough Groups** - A key route for delivering the aims of the AHSN will be by means of the newly formed Borough Groups. The Chair/convenor of each Group will be a member of the AHSN Board.

The Borough Groups will be supported in identifying and delivering projects within the six strategic themes (pages 12 and 13). The projects will have clear benefit to the local areas.

**Students** - Students, pre- and post-registration, are key to the delivery of high-quality education. The Board will include a student representative member.

**Industry** - Links are to be made and developed with industry to ensure ongoing innovation and enable implementation.

**International partnerships** - International contacts, including with the developing world, already exist within SW London. The AHSN will further develop international links to obtain and share other organisations' experiences and achievements.

NOTE: The AHSN will not have funds of its own to support projects. Membership fees will provide logistical support of bids for external funding and an administrative infrastructure for the Network. Membership fees will also cover the costs of the central office.

# Three-year plan

## The outline three-year plan for SW London AHSN is:

### Immediate

- Delivering national and London-wide agendas
- The AHSN will support bids for national and London-wide monies and projects which are relevant to its strategic themes and structure
- Develop AHSN's strategy
- Agree an annual business plan and priorities

### 2009

- Apply for a Health Innovation and Education Cluster
- It seems likely that there will be further bids in 2009 for work commissioned by NHS London Workforce

### 2009/10

- The Network will seek out London and national initiatives that involve social care and funding accessible to social care; at least one submission will be expected within the first year of its existence, and renegotiations for funding have to be undertaken
- Delivering locally driven change: The Network will aspire to at least one project being delivered, according to the criteria, by each strategic theme within the first 18 months



# Conclusion and thanks

The AHSN can, and will, improve both patient experience and health and wellbeing for the people of SW London by underpinning health and social care change with the support and expertise of the universities, and bringing these services together to work collaboratively.

Innovation, research, education and training are the cornerstones of outstanding service delivery, and SW London has an excellent foundation upon which to build dynamic change. The AHSN will link the best practice across all professional disciplines and build further research capacity. This, in turn, will inform and direct the way we train health and social care professionals for the future and enhance patient outcomes and experience.

Thank you for taking the time to read this prospectus. By working together we can add real value to the health and social care of the population of SW London nationally and internationally.

*David Astley  
Professor Ray Jones  
Professor Peter Kopelman  
Ann Radmore  
Judy Wilson*

## Contact the AHSN

For further information on the South West London Academic Health and Social Care Network, and on how to become a member, visit [www.swlondonahsn.org](http://www.swlondonahsn.org)

AHSN project launch coordinated by Sarah Fox of C21Fox Ltd



