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## Will Matt Hancock oversee a digital revolution within the NHS?

Written by Sophie-Rose Feary on 11 July 2018



With the reshuffle of Jeremy Hunt- the longest running Health Secretary - Matt Hancock joins the Department of Health and Social Care in an exciting time with an increased spending budget alongside high ambitions in the NHS's 70th year.

One challenge that Hancock will undoubtedly need to get his head around is social care. The reshuffle in January 2018 saw social care added to the departments title and as a result saw an increase in the profile of social care in the health care service. With the Health and Social Care & Housing, Communities and Local Government committees report on 'Long term social funding on adult social care' and a green paper expected this autumn, there is a lot still to be discussed. Hancock himself has called for reform for self-funding of social care, and has suggested there was a role for Government support in the care home sector. In 2012 he argued that "this is an area where cross-party support and a lack of political tension is necessary."

Further announcements were also made on the funding of the NHS. After much lobbying by the then Secretary of State, the Prime Minister announced in June 2018 that the NHS would no longer receive a one-off injection of funding, but a guaranteed increase allowing it to develop a ten-year plan. Whilst the funding was loudly welcomed by Conservative MPs, there has been much disagreement over

whether the money will make NHS fit for future, where the money will be best used and most importantly, where the money will come from. This is a storm Hancock will now be the centre of, and one he has no experience in.

Perhaps the part we are likely to see Hancock excel will be in the digital and technological innovation of the NHS. With his previous role at DCSM and his enthusiasm for technology, it is likely that we will see the continuation of his predecessor's policies, with a further push to get the NHS online and fit for the future. However, there is a possibility that other areas prioritised by the previous Secretary of State such as patient safety, could take a backseat- an error that could be the fatal blow in a role that is often thought of as a poisonous chalice in politics.

Whilst Hancock's involvement in health policies have been unsurprisingly limited, he has stood in favour of future Government support in life science industries, social care and technological advancements before taking a position in the Cabinet only six months ago.

Hancock's relatively low profile in the Cabinet could act in favour of a man set to take such as controversial position in Government with a momentous task ahead or it could be the end of a short career in the top office.

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