

# What is the role of provider networks in implementing major system change in specialist cancer surgery?<sup>1</sup>



Research:  
at a glance

## 1. What we knew

- **Major system change (MSC)** involves making changes happen across a number of organisations<sup>2</sup>. MSC has several, sometimes conflicting, goals.
- People are still learning how MSC is planned and put into action.

## 2. What we did

We wanted to know how specialist cancer surgery across North London and West Essex was centralised into a small number of specialist centres, and how network leadership influenced this.

We interviewed **81 people** involved in the changes, observed **134 hours** of meetings, and reviewed over **100 documents** in order to understand:

- the role of a network of provider organisations in achieving change
- what network leaders and managers did to put the changes into action
- Which factors played a part in putting the changes into action successfully

## 3. What we found

- The changes were led by a **core central team**, made up of network leaders, managers, and clinicians with managerial roles
- Leadership was spread across different parts of the system and among people of different levels of seniority
- Network leadership needed to be **consistent** over several years
- The team used many different **ways to engage** with hospital organisations and other groups
- However, some people **resisted** the proposed changes. Some clinicians and patients **questioned the reasons given** for the changes, and some felt the changes were put into action in a **divisive** way.

## 4. What this means

Networks of healthcare provider organisations can help make MSC happen, but several things make a difference:

- The core leadership team needs to be consistent over time
- Leaders should engage actively with providers in the network
- Leadership needs to be shared across the network
- We believe more attention needs to be paid to the role of provider networks in transforming care services



## References

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2. **Best A, Greenhalgh T, Lewis S, et al.** Large-system transformation in health care: a realist review. *Milbank Q* 2012;90:421.

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## Our website

<https://www.ihpo.manchester.ac.uk/research/projects/respect-21/>

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