

cock
the new Secretary of
Health and Social Care

T H E

D O W N

Matt Hancock

A look at the new Secretary of
State for Health and Social Care

mhp

L O A D

INTRODUCTION



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A surprise survivor of the purge of Cameron’s team undertaken by Theresa May when she entered No 10, Matt Hancock’s career has flourished under her Premiership, first entering Cabinet and now taking on one of the most high-profile roles in Government.

So, who is the real Matt Hancock? Commentators have inevitably focussed on his pupillage under George Osborne, advising him for five years alongside Ed Llewellyn and Rupert Harrison as the Conservatives prepared for Government. But it would be dangerous to dismiss Hancock as simply following the ideological standpoint of the former Chancellor.

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Whatever your view of Jeremy Hunt, his longevity in the Department of Health (and latterly Social Care), led to consistency in ministerial priorities. But just a week after the NHS celebrated its 70th anniversary, Hunt has gone and the future for the NHS feels more uncertain. Whilst Hancock’s previous contributions on healthcare have been limited, new Secretaries of State often look to differentiate from their predecessors – whether in style or substance.

“His recent attempt at parkour demonstrates a sense of humour but also a taste for an eye-catching stunt”

There are certain similarities – the Department has another Secretary of State who voted remain. And like Hunt, he has shown a willingness to bridge the divide created by the referendum – being the one Minister who hopped between the CBI annual party and the 40th Birthday party hosted by Vote Leave Chief Executive Matthew Elliot on the same Spring evening this year.

Hancock is genuinely passionate about technology, and brought this energy to his brief at DCMS. The ‘Matt Hancock MP’ app and his recent attempt at parkour demonstrate a sense of humour but also a taste for an eye-catching stunt. His biography on the government pages highlights that he once succumbed to frostbite in a bid to play cricket at the most northerly point on earth. Whilst reactions to his appointment have been polarised, relations will need to thaw if Hancock is to have a similar tenure to his predecessor.

As Hancock enters 39 Victoria Street, how could he brush up on his knowledge of healthcare? Drawing inspiration from his love of tech, the MHP Health team has set out some priorities in the form of apps to guide the new Secretary of State through his in-tray.

FIVE APPLICATIONS TO HELP MATT HANCOCK

Hancock's
Essentials



HANCOCK'S TOP APPS



1 Target practice: Getting cancer treatment back on track

HEALTH & FITNESS

2.5 ★★☆☆☆

Current user rating

The challenge: England continues to perform below international counterparts on survival rates for key cancers such as cervical and breast, despite the existence of comprehensive screening programmes.

This app will help the new Secretary of State to assess the complex treatment pathways, and choose where to invest. Should the roll out of new screening programmes, such as for bowel cancer, be accelerated, or is effort better focused on improved investment in specialist cancer centres?

Why download: The Prime Minister has called for improvement in cancer outcomes, alongside mental health investment, to be a focus of the new £20bn deal. This creates pressure, but also brings with it funding that can help shift the dial on outcomes. Jeremy Hunt had previously been urged by senior NHS figures to pledge to double the cancer budget over the long term - an increase from the current £7.5bn to £15bn. Hancock is known to champion mental health support - but will he pursue cancer policies with similar energy?



2 Find my STP

NAVIGATION

1.5 ★☆☆☆☆

Current user rating

The challenge: The creation of Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs) - and their successors Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) - has been far from straightforward. One of the common criticisms of the plan - which emerged directly from NHS England and Simon Stevens's Five Year Forward View is that they lack statutory footing, with the purchaser-provider split sitting underneath.

Hancock will need an app to help navigate the congested local healthcare landscape and rebuild credibility in the STP story, which has been badly damaged by speculation of hospital closures and privatisation by the back door.

Why download: Simon Stevens has highlighted his desire to dissolve the purchaser-provider split, but without legal backing he is running out of rope. Number 10 has now indicated it would be willing to bring forward legislative change if the NHS specifically calls for it. However, given the parliamentary arithmetic this approach would carry significant risk. Hancock will be all too aware of replicating the legacy of Andrew Lansley, the last Conservative Health Secretary to push system design through the Commons.

HANCOCK'S TOP APPS (CONTINUED)



3 Regulation under the microscope

PRODUCTIVITY

4.0 ★★★★★

Current user rating

The challenge: How many regulators is too many regulators? In March 2018, NHS England and NHS Improvement announced several steps to improve joint working and reduce duplication. This followed earlier efforts to introduce a joint regional structure, and better coordination across the distinct roles carried out by CQC and NHS Improvement.

Use this app to understand where the efficiencies are, and tidy up the duplication in the system.

Why download: Several key figures – including New Chair of NHSI Baroness Harding – have proactively encouraged closer working between NHSE and NHSI. But is a possible merger achievable, or even desirable? There is a logic to keeping NHS Improvement (which is legally constituted of Monitor and the NHS Trust Development Authority) and NHS England separate. NHSI is responsible for regulating the actions of NHS England, and bringing poacher and gamekeeper under one roof could create issues down the track.



4 NHS Workforce - Filling the 100,000

EDUCATION

2.0 ★★☆☆☆

Current user rating

The challenge: The NHS is facing unprecedented workforce gaps with more than 100,000 nurse and doctor positions unfilled – representing one in 12 of all posts in the health service. The pay deal that has recently been accepted by the Unions may help to slow the rate of those leaving, whilst five new medical schools open in England in September. But training a doctor takes between 10-12 years and the volume of applications for places must rise to meet the demand. As Simon Stevens acknowledged during a recent interview with Andrew Marr quick fixes will be hard to come by.

This app will provide a level headed view on the workforce challenges – and identify how to engage people to think positively about a career in the NHS.

Why download: The GP Forward View placed a big emphasis on training 5,000 new GPs by 2020. But less than two years from the deadline, the target looks a long way off. Does Hancock opt for further ambitious, and potentially unachievable targets within this parliament?

HANCOCK'S TOP APPS (CONTINUED)



5 WhatsApp with Social Care?

SOCIAL NETWORKING

3.0 ★★☆☆☆

Current user rating

The challenge: Social care - a system that few people revere or understand like the NHS - also celebrates 70 years in existence this year. But achieving a similar long-term funding solution feels distant. There are no easy choices here. As Andy Burnham and Nick Timothy will both testify, bold (and often admirable) solutions will be quickly exploited by the Opposition of the day, and public appetite to fund social care through taxation is limited.

This app will assist Hancock in getting the conversation started with the public. Building awareness of the problem - and need for a solution - is the first step. As demonstrated with the collective campaigning over NHS funding, a message needs to reach fever pitch before the Chancellor will be forced into action.

Why download: This is among the thorniest tasks Hancock will face. The public has little understanding of how the social care system operates, and even less understanding of how it is funded. A social care green paper is expected in the Autumn, but with many unanswered questions further delay is likely.

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