

Navigating Primary Care Networks



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What is a Primary Care Network (PCN)?

Groups of GP practices working with community and social care partners.

Serve populations of 30,000–50,000 people.

Provide coordinated, personalised, and proactive care.

Support collaboration and workforce resilience.

Herding Tigers

Have you ever heard of the phrase herding cats?

In general practice, it's more like herding tigers who are brilliant, driven, sometimes ferocious, powerful beings who can't be corralled.

They must be carefully and strategically led.



PCN Services and Activities



Deliver core requirements under the PCN DES.



Enhanced Access and Social Prescribing.



Care Homes, CVD, Cancer Diagnosis, Medicines Optimisation.



Reduce inequalities and improve local capacity.

PCN Income Streams

- Core PCN Funding and Enhanced Access Payment.
- Care Home Premium and Impact & Investment Fund (IIF).
- Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS).
- Capacity and Access Support Payment.

How PCNs Are Managed?

- Led by the Clinical Director and PCN Manager or the Digital and Transformation Lead
- PCN Board is made up of clinical colleagues and practice managers
- Decisions are made across practices collectively
- Governed by a network agreement

PCN Management Models

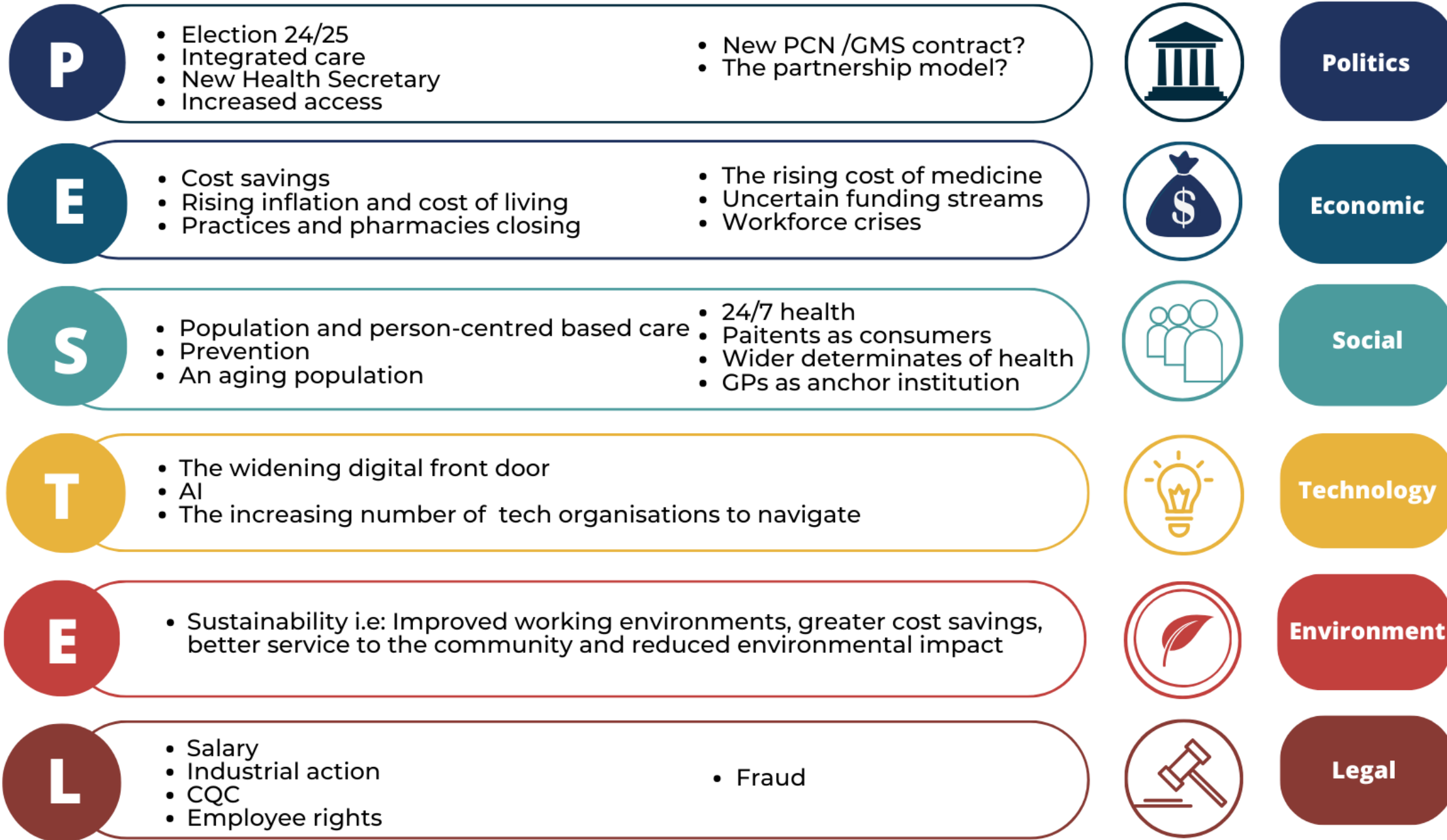
- Lead Practice – one practice manages HR and finance.
- Shared Employment – distributed responsibilities.
- Commissioned Provider – federation or trust manages operations.
- Legal Entity – CIC or Limited Company for accountability.

Evolving into Neighbourhood Teams

- PCNs forming Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs).
- Focus on multidisciplinary, place-based care.
- Closer collaboration with community and voluntary partners.
- Shared responsibility for outcomes and inequalities.

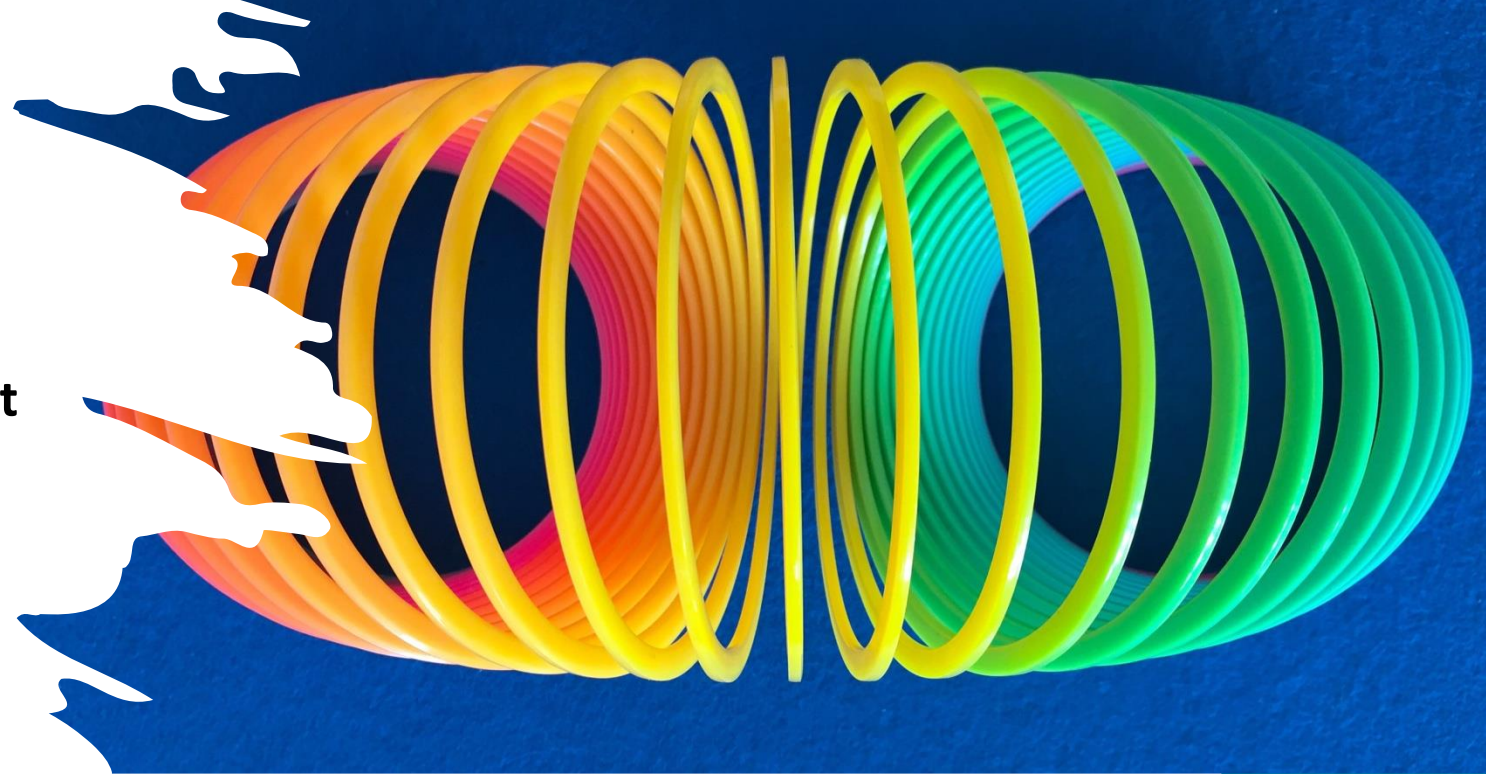
**UNDERSTANDING THE ENVIRONMENT,
YOU WORK WITHIN**

RECRUITMENT
DEMAND RELATIONSHIPS
CAPACITY
EQUITY
INCORPORATION?
FINANCIAL
PLANNING
LIABILITY
RETENTION
INFRASTRUCTURE
SUCCESSION
PLANNING
LEADERSHIP
CHALLENGE
LACK OF TIME
UNCERTAINTY
MULTIPLE BUSINESSES
PREMISES
LACK OF TRUST AND FAITH IN THE SYSTEM
BOUNDARY
WHERE IS OUR VOICE HEARD?
DIFFERENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS
CONFLICT
VARIATION
IN ICB
SUPPORT
CONTRACTS



What the Complexity Theory Teaches Us

- Systems may be predictable in the present.
- They can be unpredictable in the long term.
- A change in one part of the system could have a ripple effect in another part of the system.
- Systems are constantly restructuring and self-organising.
- Systems are a web of opposing forces that interact and collide with each other.
- It's a foundation in life.
- The power doesn't lie in an org chart; it's reflected in how people connect.



BOUNDARY SPANNING ROLES IN PCNS AND WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE FOR YOU

What is a Boundary-Spanning Role?

1. Acts as a bridge between different professional groups, organisations, and sectors.
2. Understands and interprets various professional cultures and practices.
3. Connects people with different interests and helps them work together.
4. Builds relationships based on trust.
5. Utilises key skills such as communication, listening, empathy, negotiation, and conflict resolution.
6. Manages the connections between different groups and individuals.
7. Navigates organisational politics through diplomacy and influence.
8. Serves as a powerful intermediary who builds consensus.

Boundary-Spanning in Action

Clinical Services

Physio delivery teams • Patient care • Clinical standards • Quality outcomes

Operations & Admin

Scheduling • HR • Compliance • Day-to-day management • Resources

Business Development

Contract bids • Relationship management • Growth strategy • Commercial goals

Quality & Governance

Audits • CQC • Risk management • Policies • Clinical governance



External: Multiple NHS Organisations

Primary Care Networks

Multiple PCNs across regions • Contract requirements • Local priorities • PCN-specific KPIs • Patient access

GP Practices

Individual surgeries • Referral pathways • Clinical integration • Practice-level needs • Patient care

ICB Commissioners

Funding decisions • Service specifications • Performance monitoring • Strategic priorities

NHS Trust / Community Trust

Secondary care pathways • Discharge planning • Patient services • Integrated care



You: The Boundary Spanner

 Translator

 Trust Builder

 Communicator

 Political Navigator

 Connector

 Interpreter

Your Key Functions as a Boundary Spanner

- **Translate:** Convert clinical language for business teams; explain commercial realities to clinicians; interpret NHS jargon for your organisation
- **Build Trust:** Establish credibility with GPs, PCN leaders, your internal teams, and commissioners across different organisational cultures
- **Navigate Politics:** Understand power dynamics between PCNs, trusts, and ICBs; manage competing priorities; work within NHS structures
- **Connect Stakeholders:** Link clinical delivery teams with business development; bridge PCN needs with organisational capacity
- **Interpret Priorities:** Help each group understand others' constraints, goals, and pressures to find common ground

It's a Balancing Act

Autonomous	Collaborative
Participative and Advocacy	Authoritative
Bargaining and negotiation	Surrendering
Professional	Personable
Understanding the hierarchy and power in place	Flatten the MDT approach
Strategic	Flexible approach with multiple options
Your sense of agency	Accountability
Control	Permission
Lead	Follow
Transparent	Confidant

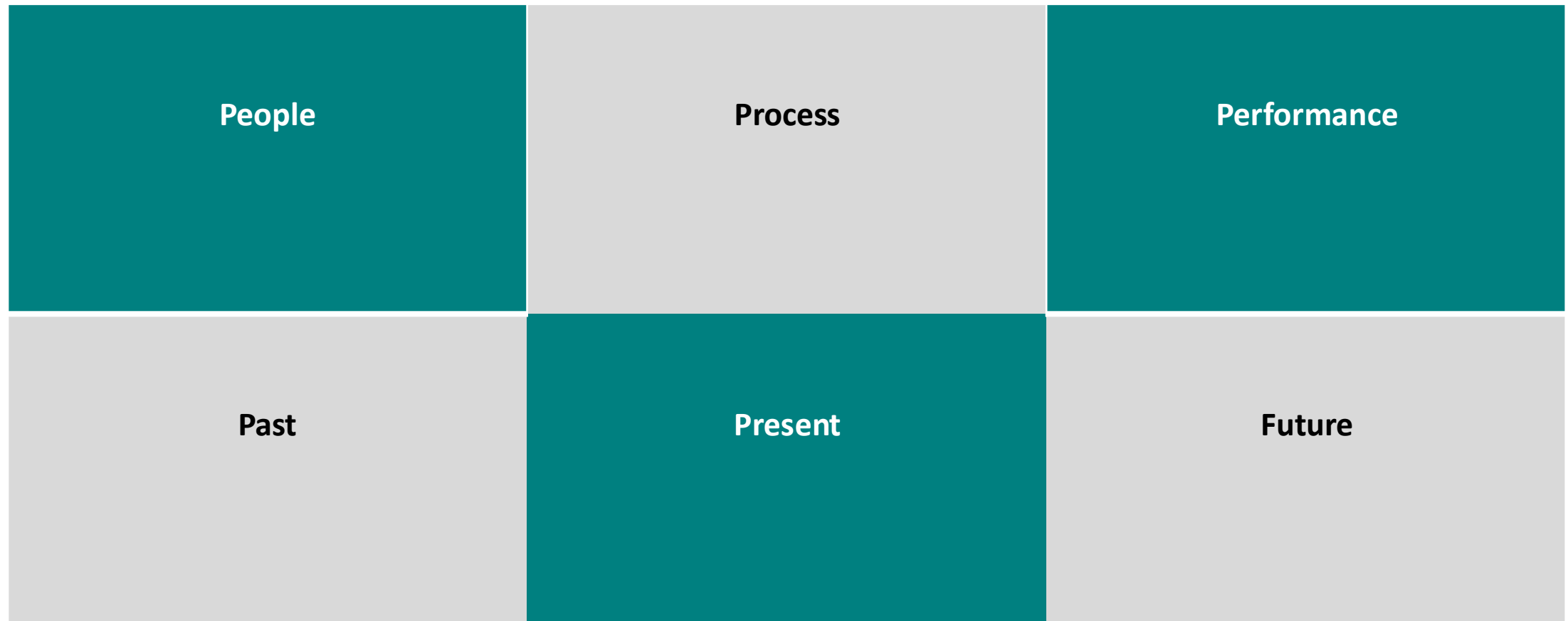
Am I seen, heard and Valued?

- Many PCN roles feel unappreciated.
- They want more money.
- PCN colleagues want more recognition for the work they do.
- Clinical roles appear more valued than non-clinical roles.



DECISION MAKING BY COMMITTEE

What are PCNs making our decision based on?



When It Comes to Decision-Making by Committee

Lack of Interest	Uncertain about what's required	Scared of the Unknown	Distracted	No urgency	Low perceived importance
Lack of incentive	Not enough information / Too much information	Perceived Threat to the status quo	Emotional attachments	No emotional attachment	Fear of failure
Too complex	No sustainability	Not thought out <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Why- Who- What- When- How- Culture- Sustainability- Timing	Equity	Lack of understanding or appreciation about the context	Political / Historical tension

Build Your Allies | Relationships Are EVERYTHING

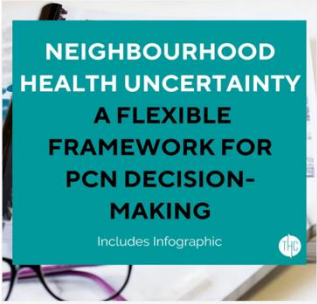
Why Stakeholder Mapping Matters

- You can't influence people you haven't identified.
- Different stakeholders need different approaches.
- Helps you prioritise your time and energy.
- Reveals potential allies and blockers early.

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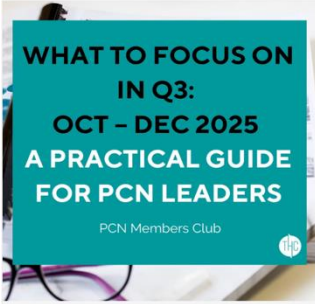
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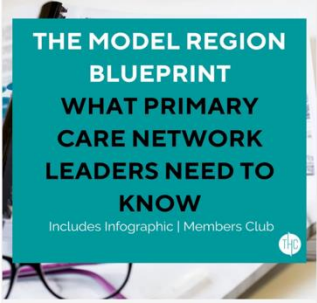
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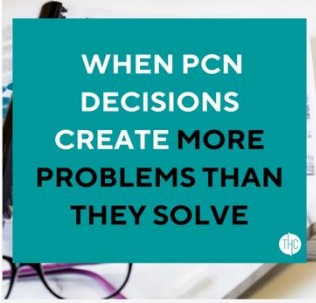
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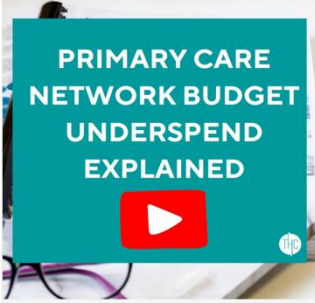
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WHEN PCN DECISIONS CREATE MORE PROBLEMS THAN THEY SOLVE

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WHEN PCN DECISIONS CREATE MORE PROBLEMS THAN THEY SOLVE



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PRIMARY CARE NETWORK BUDGET UNDERSPEND EXPLAINED



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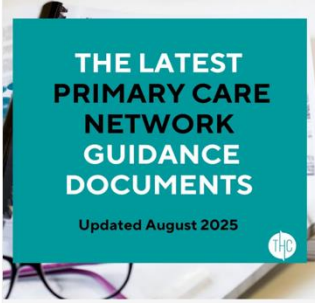
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