

NHS Next Stage Review

*Our vision for primary and community care:
What it means for patients and the public.*

The headlines

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Local services, there for you, every day

When people think of the NHS, hospitals often spring to mind. Fortunately, the majority of people who turn to the NHS don't need to go to hospital. Instead, 90% of care takes place in the community, with GPs, dentists, opticians, pharmacists, nurses and others. These are the people we rely on every day. We call them your primary and community care services.

What is primary and community care?

There are hundreds of thousands of staff who provide care, advice and support for millions of people every day. Caring for people with long term conditions like diabetes and heart disease. Treating everything from back pain to chest infections, to depression or tooth decay. They help new mothers with their babies and those who are coming to the end of their life. They help us to stay well with health screening and advice and they care for the very sick.

We understand just how important they are, and it is why we have developed a new vision for their future. To help us do this, we talked to hundreds of people across the country, including patients and members of the public, as well as doctors and nurses.

You told us you want to see primary and community care services that are personal, considering you as an individual, and high quality. They should be there to treat you when you are unwell and help you to live a full and healthy life. They should be there, where and when you need them most.

You also told us how much you value your relationship with your doctor, and the many other health professionals who care and support you. We want to build on these relationships, giving more control of local services to local doctors, nurses and others who know you best.

A changing world

But we also know that some services aren't always up to scratch, and we need to make sure that everyone has the chance to receive high quality care. And sometimes things seem more complicated than they need to be. We also know that in the future there will be more older people, more people who are overweight and have conditions like diabetes, and new drugs and treatments will continue to become available. The online world will continue to expand, providing great opportunities, and challenges, for both patients and health professionals. So we need to work with the future in mind.

Easy-to-access services that meet your individual needs

Connected so they make sense

People shouldn't need to make three visits when one would do, or keep repeating the same information to a series of different doctors and nurses. This is why we think it is so important that services are more joined up.

In some cases, this could mean bringing a range of services under one roof – like x-ray or physiotherapy – but it could also mean organisations working together more closely. The most important thing is that it's less complicated and there are no gaps from the patient's point of view.

Designed around your needs

Every community has different needs and priorities, so there will be no national blueprint. Local people, health services and health professionals will be able to decide what works best in each area.

People shaping services

We think it's really important that services seek out your views from day one and keep listening to your feedback. We already run a national GP survey, asking you how easy it is to get to see a GP and book an appointment. From next

Integrated care services in Leicester

*"Before, if we wanted to see a doctor, we had to travel half way across the city and I know that some people had not seen a doctor for years until the new centre opened."
Braunstone resident*

For many people in Braunstone, a suburb of Leicester, the journey to their nearest GP was long and difficult. Some people avoided going to see their doctor altogether.

The *Leicester Housing Association* worked in partnership with *Leicester City Council* and *Leicester PCT* to develop the Braunstone Health and Social Care Centre. Local GPs at the centre work closely with nursing staff, physiotherapists and social workers, to join up services for patients, making the system simpler with expanded services. Patients with a range of care needs can now be treated in the same place by the same team, rather than by separate teams in different locations across Leicester. Patients can, for instance, visit their GP and then collect medicines at the on-site pharmacy.

year we will be extending the survey, to find out more about the overall quality of the service. For example – can you speak to a GP over the phone? Are all the staff helpful and courteous? Do you feel your problem was understood and dealt with?

Seeing a doctor where and when you need it, and keeping your local GP

Being able to register with a local GP is something that both patients and GPs really value, and we have no intention of cutting those ties. Keeping that relationship is very important, particularly if you need to see them regularly.

However, if you commute to work, are away from home or on holiday, want to see a doctor on evenings and weekends, or are simply not registered with a GP, and need to see a doctor, you will now be able to go to one of 150 new GP health centres (which some people have called polyclinics). These will be open seven days a week, from 8am til 8pm, in a place that is easy to get to. You won't need to register with these new centres, you will just be able to use them as and when you need to. They will give you the best of both worlds. You can either book an appointment ahead, or just turn up, whichever is most convenient.

Choosing your GP

When choosing which GP practice to register with, people have different priorities. At the moment, however, it can be a leap of faith. We want to make sure that you have information about the quality and services available from different GP practices, so you can make a more informed choice. In the future, your choice will influence more directly the money that is paid to GP practices. This means there will be a clearer incentive for GPs to provide good services to attract more patients, which we think means better services across the board.

For some people though, it's not possible to make a choice because practices have too many patients, or won't accept people from the wrong side of the main road. We want you to be able to exercise your right to choose your GP. We want your local Primary Care Trusts (the people who manage local health services) to work with GPs and expand some of the best GP practices, so that more people can register there. If they can't do that, they'll need to come up with alternatives that work for local people.

"I think it is important to have a 'base' practice where I go most often, with the opportunity to go elsewhere if I need to." Patient, NHS Next Stage Review deliberative event

A broader range of choice

There is no reason why you should only be able to choose your GP and hospital. There should be a wider range of choices right across the community. For example, pharmacies have a growing role in offering treatments for minor ailments, like coughs and colds, support to help you stop smoking and advice on taking medicines. They can test you for diabetes and high cholesterol. Community nursing teams and others working in the community will also be able to offer you more choice. This might include being able to refer yourself to physiotherapy if you have back pain, or the availability of very specialist services, for example for homeless people.

Local information about your health services

Every area will have a 'health directory' that will tell you all about the health services closest to you – how they work, what's available, where they are and when they are open.

Helping you lead a full and healthy life

We want to work with communities to make being healthy part of everyday life. And we want to make it as easy as possible.

We will make good health information more widely available, not just on the internet, but in the GP surgery, the pharmacy and through health professionals. We will provide health information people can rely on.

Tackling stroke and heart disease

People and families have different health needs throughout their lives. We need to look at all age groups and support them to be healthy. For those approaching middle age, for instance, heart disease and stroke can have a devastating impact. Together they kill about 160,000 people per year, with many more living with permanent disabilities. Tackling this problem is a major challenge and there is no one solution. We will help people to lead healthy lives as well as identifying those at risk.

Vascular checks for people aged 40–74 will identify people at risk and offer advice on how to reduce this risk, including treatment where necessary. To make sure we get to as many people as possible checks will be offered in a range of places, including your local pharmacy, and maybe even the local leisure centre or village hall.

Quality matters most

In future, we will be rewarding GP practices for the quality of the services and care they give you. We will also put more emphasis on how they help you and your family stay healthy.

Health screening in Birmingham

"I didn't realise my blood pressure was high and didn't think I was someone at risk of heart trouble. I'm keeping things in check and I feel much healthier now I've made changes to my lifestyle." *Patient who received screening*

In some of the most disadvantaged communities in Birmingham, men over 40 had a significantly lower life expectancy than in the rest of the country.

The *Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Partnership* working with *Lloydspharmacy* has started a heart health (cardiovascular) screening programme for men over 40 in eleven of the city's most deprived areas. The partnership wanted to make sure that as many patients as possible were screened and made these services available at local football grounds, community centres and other health clinics. So when men are invited for screening it's easy to get to. They're also open during the evenings and at weekends.

The pharmacist, doctor or nurse discusses the results with each person. They are then given appropriate lifestyle advice, including information on a healthy diet, exercise, sensible drinking and giving up smoking. Where needed they are offered specialist programmes which can help them – such as the Stop Smoking Service and some are referred to their GP.

So far, over 36,000 people have been identified as at risk and helped. What is also really encouraging is that three-quarters of those screened plan to change their diet and do more exercise.

More control of your health condition, and support to plan, understand and manage your health

We know how important it is that people have help to understand the health conditions they have to live with – such as diabetes or asthma – and that they know how to manage them and keep them under control. We will make comprehensive information available for the 15 million plus people with long term conditions.

Based on your individual needs

We also know how important it is for people to be involved in decisions about the care and support they receive. This means recognising individuals, their values, needs and preferences, rather than using the same identikit approach for everyone, allowing people to pick and choose the care that is right for them. By 2010, everyone (young and old) with a long term condition will be offered their own personal care plan, and, if they need it, a dedicated person to help and support them.

More involved in care

"I feel more involved in the treatment of my diabetes and that's helping me manage my condition better." Gurdip Rahman, diabetes patient

Gurdip is 74 and has had type 2 diabetes for eight years. He has just experienced a new approach to his diabetes annual review, which has made him feel more confident and in control of his condition. Gurdip had his usual blood tests, blood pressure check and weight and foot screening checks with the healthcare assistant at his GP practice. But instead of waiting for the results, the healthcare assistant explained they would be posted to Gurdip in advance of his follow up appointment so he could read them in preparation for his annual review.

Gurdip felt better prepared for his appointment with the practice nurse and was able to contribute to the discussion. He also found it a relief to know the results in advance, as he was usually quite nervous to find out what they were. The practice nurse talked to him about his personal goals for his diabetes care and helped him create an action plan for achieving them. At the end of the appointment he was surprised it had still taken just the usual 25 minutes as it felt like he had covered much more than usual.

How will all this become reality?

Your local health service and your local GPs and nurses will be responsible for making this vision a reality – because they know and understand your needs better than anyone. Many of them are already doing some of the things we describe – there are some truly fantastic examples around the country. What we want is for these great examples to be the norm.

We want doctors and nurses to be able to take a lead in designing services. We want them to be innovative and try new things. If people will benefit then we should do things differently. It won't be the same everywhere because different communities have different needs. What we do know is that working together and joining up services will be key.

Your Primary Care Trust (PCT) will be working with local health professionals to take this forward and will be asking you for your views. If you want to know what is happening in your local area, we suggest you contact your local PCT. You can find them through a search on the internet or by looking in your local phone book, or through NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk)



For more information on healthy living, health services and free choice visit NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk.

You can also contact your local Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS) for advice and information about the NHS, who you can find through NHS Choices or at www.pals.nhs.uk

To read the full version of the primary and community care strategy, visit www.dh.gov.uk



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