

Media release

11 July 2019

Better for you, better for Devon – help us shape the future for health and care

People across Devon can help shape the future for health and care in the county by sharing their views as part of a major engagement programme launching today (11 July 2019).

Devon is developing a local version of the NHS Long Term Plan, called *Better for you, Better for Devon*. The plan will make sure we are fit for the future, providing high quality care and better health outcomes for people and their families, through every stage of life.

The national Long Term Plan, published in January 2019, was developed in partnership with those who know the NHS best – frontline health and care staff, patients and their families.

Now here in Devon, we are starting an eight-week period of engagement* (from 11 July to 5 September 2019) to develop our own Long Term Plan, *Better for You, Better for Devon*. The plan will focus on improving people's health and mental health, and supporting people to stay well.

Part of the conversation will centre on the big challenges we face, as these will influence the future of health and care:

- Medical advances mean people are living longer – something we celebrate. But people now often live with multiple illnesses, such as cancer, heart problems and type 2 diabetes. We need to ensure services can provide what they need
- Preventable illnesses like type 2 diabetes are increasing, and the amount of time people live in good health has been decreasing since 2012

- Vital health and care jobs remain unfilled - 1 in 10 nurse jobs and 1 in 12 social worker posts in Devon remain vacant as demand for services increase. There is a shortage of people to undertake these roles
- There have been increases in NHS funding, but peoples' needs for services are growing faster
- Devon's population is growing and is expected to rise by about 33,000 people – equivalent to the population of Exmouth – over the next five years.

Better for You, Better for Devon will build on work we have previously done and will focus on real changes to how we support people.

This will see us strengthening prevention to support people to live healthier lives, supporting GP and community services to intervene early to support local people, enhancing services to help children, young people and adults needing mental health support, and having high-quality, efficient hospital services in the right place when people need them.

We will work more closely with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations, charities and the broader social care sector to improve people's health and wellbeing.

People taking part in our engagement will be asked some questions that will help shape our plans. Questions include:

- How can we work more closely with volunteers and the voluntary sector to better support people to live healthier and for longer?
- How can we better support people in their communities and in their own homes?
- What could we do to promote careers in health and social care (e.g. working with schools and young people)?

To ensure we get really good detailed feedback, the majority of the engagement exercise will be delivered by local councils and NHS organisations and will be based on local priorities. This will involve focus groups, face-to-face discussions and surveys.



There will also be county-wide engagement using 1,700 members of the public who are part of our new Citizen's Panel, surveys of GP practice participation groups (PPGs) and phone questionnaires with patients.

Dr Rob Dyer, lead medical director for Devon, is working on the development of *Better for You, Better for Devon*. He said: "The NHS is one of our nation's greatest achievements, and for 70 years dedicated NHS staff have been there for us in Devon and across the country. But more people are living longer, many with complex health conditions, so the NHS and local councils need to plan so they can work more smartly and effectively, deliver excellent care and attract and retain the best staff.

"Now the national plan has been published, we – as the local health and care system in Devon – need to decide how best to take the ambitions it contains and turn them into real improvements in services over the next few years.

"Better for You, Better for Devon will build on the progress we have already made in recent years by working more closely together. Placing a greater emphasis on supporting people in their communities is at the heart of our plan and we're very keen to hear what local people have got to say this summer."

The NHS Long Term Plan describes the actions that will need to be taken at local, regional and national level to make its ambitious vision a reality:

- Joining up the NHS and social care so patients don't 'fall through the cracks', such as by breaking down the barriers between GP services and those in the community.
- Helping individuals and families to help themselves, by taking a more active role in preventing ill-health, such as offering dedicated support to people to stop smoking, lose weight and cut down on alcohol.
- Tackling health inequalities by working with specific groups who are vulnerable to poor health, with targeted support to help homeless people, black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, and those with mental illnesses or learning disabilities.

- Backing our workforce by increasing the number of people working in the delivery of NHS services, particularly in mental health, primary care and community services.
- Bringing the NHS into the digital age, rolling out technology such as new digital GP services that will improve access and help patients make appointments, manage prescriptions and view health records on-line.
- Spending extra investment wisely, making sure money goes where it matters most. The NHS will continue to reduce waste, tackle variations and improve the effectiveness of treatments.

More details about opportunities to help shape those plans will be shared shortly. In the meantime, read a copy of the [national plan](#), find out more on the [Devon STP website](#) take part in the [survey](#).

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* Guidance for journalists – engagement v consultation: In the NHS, there is a difference between the statutory definitions of ‘consultation’ and ‘engagement’. However, this is often confused. For absolute clarity, the process detailed in this news release is an engagement process. This matters because a consultation is a formal statutory process, normally linked to a proposed change to an NHS service, which does not apply here. Although we recognise that engagement and consultation are often used interchangeably, referring to this process as engagement, as opposed to consultation, may help avoid confusion.