

Update from NHS Devon

July 2024

New Chief Medical Officer appointed for NHS Devon

We have appointed Peter Collins, from Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust, as our new chief medical officer for NHS Devon.

Peter, who will join us on 7 October, is an experienced and skilled chief medical officer and secondary care consultant who has operated at a senior level in the south west for almost two decades.

Having originally trained as a liver specialist (hepatologist), Peter worked at University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust for more than 15 years.

He has since held deputy and chief medical officer roles for trusts in Bristol, Weston-super-Mare and, most recently, Salisbury, where he led an improvement programme across areas including strategy, operational and culture.

Nigel Acheson, who joined NHS Devon in April 2022, retired on the 30 June. Nigel's knowledge, expertise and compassionate leadership has been a huge benefit to our organisation and system. We are grateful for everything Nigel has done in the past two years and wish him all the best for the future.

Interim arrangements are in place for the period between Nigel leaving and Peter starting.

Kevin Orford becomes interim NHS Devon Chair as Sarah Wollaston stands down

Dr Sarah Wollaston, Chair of NHS Devon, announced her decision to stand down from the role on Monday 10 June with immediate effect. NHS Devon's Deputy Chair, Kevin Orford, has stepped into the role of Chair on an interim basis.

Kevin is an experienced board director who has held Chief Executive, executive director, non-executive director and trustee positions on NHS, charity and government agency boards for over 25 years. He will also take on the role of interim Chair of the One Devon Partnership, the system's Integrated Care Partnership.

NHS England South West is responsible for appointing Sarah's permanent successor and further details about the arrangements will be shared in due course.

For full details please visit: [Kevin Orford becomes interim NHS Devon Chair as Sarah Wollaston announces decision to stand down - One Devon](#)

111 update

NHS Devon commission the Integrated Urgent Care Service (IUCS) on behalf of Devon residents and visiting patients. This is a single contract held by Practice Plus Group (PPG) for the provision of:

- NHS 111 call handling services
- Clinical contact as required for those accessing care through 111 online
- Clinical Assessment Service (CAS)
- Primary care face-to-face treatment out-of-hours

The service plays an important role in the urgent and emergency care system, providing a viable alternative to emergency departments (ED) and ambulance services for patients with urgent care needs.

PPG has made a positive impact in Devon since taking on the contract in September 2022. Highlights include:

- Meeting levels of demand
- Improvements in call handling response
- 115 new staff recruited
- Opening of the Plymouth call centre 24 hours a day
- Excellent CAS capacity for telephone consultation and health care professional support
- Safety processes for key areas such as clinical recruitment and medicines management, staff and stakeholder engagement
- Reduced reliance on national contingency support

Further service development and improvement work is underway to maximise the benefits of the service.

Around 35,000 111 calls from Devon were answered in April. Overall, the month was significantly busier than December, which is typically the busiest month.

In April, the calls handled by PPG averaged just over 1.5 minutes to answer, 1 minute quicker than in March. Nationally the time taken to answer averaged 3 minutes. The rate of calls abandoned was 3.7%, a further decrease from March (5.6%).

The number of 111 calls assessed by a clinician or clinical advisor is an important performance indicator for the Integrated Urgent Care Service. The national target of

50% and local target of 55% were exceeded again in April, with 56% of calls assessed by a clinician.

If a 111 assessment leads to an outcome that suggests a patient should be sent to an Emergency Department (ED) or sent an ambulance (category 3 – not immediately life threatening or category 4 – not urgent), the call should be reviewed by a clinician. This process is called validation and is a system priority for the ICB. In April, the ambulance validation rate was 84.5% and the ED validation rate was 85%. Local targets for validation are set at 75% for ED and 85% for ambulance which is more challenging than the national targets of 50% for ED and 75% for ambulance.

During April, the CAS dealt with circa 6,000 patients whilst the out of hours (OOH) team managed over 8,000 contacts with patients either through advice by telephone, by appointment at a treatment centre or via a home visit.

Spring covid vaccination campaign

The spring covid vaccination campaign closed on 30 June. 135,823 eligible people have received their covid jab in Devon this spring resulting in uptake of 69.8%, compared to 72.5% in last year's Spring campaign.

The vaccine offer formally opened to everyone outside of a care home on 22 April, but NHS staff began going into older adult care homes to provide vaccinations from 15 April, with 6510 (72.5% of those eligible), care home residents now having received their protection.

Vaccination sites in Devon included Greendale near Exeter, Home Park in Plymouth, some community pharmacies and GP practices.

For the first time, joint bookings could be made for those who use the online booking system or NHS 119 to get their jab. By selecting a joint booking, two eligible people aged 18 and over could get the COVID-19 vaccine in the same location at the same time, making it easier than ever to get protected.

We will share details about the autumn campaign as soon as we have further information available.

Perinatal Pelvic Health Service Launched

June 2024 has seen the launch of Devon's new Perinatal Pelvic Health Service (PPHS).

This new service aims to reduce the number of women living with pelvic health problems during pregnancy, postnatally and in later life.

The Devon PPHS team of physios and midwives are leading local delivery of the national NHS Long Term Plan's ambition to improve prevention, identification and referral to NICE-recommended treatment for pelvic health problems during pregnancy and following birth.

The PPHS has three overarching functions to:

- Embed evidence-based practice in antenatal, intrapartum and postnatal care to prevent and mitigate pelvic health problems, resulting from pregnancy and birth.
- Improve the rate of identification of pelvic health problems antenatally and postnatally.
- Ensure timely access to NICE-recommended conservative treatment for common pelvic health problems antenatally and 12 months postnatally.

Training in pelvic health for maternity staff has been undertaken and will continue as mandatory training for maternity staff in Devon. We will seek to develop training in primary care in the next phase of the service.

Easy, single point access routes have been created to refer to the PPHS team, ensuring our more women can access care.

Women are recommended to self-assess prior to 18 weeks pregnant and at 6-8 weeks postnatally to increase identification of pelvic health dysfunction. They can self-refer directly into the service when required via the [My Health Devon website](#) or can be referred to the service by a midwife or GP.

My Health (myhealth-devon.nhs.uk) has helpful information, self-assessment and self-referral (including translations and animations) for both clinicians and patients.

Exercise to prevent falls

Plymouth has successfully secured further funding to continue the Falls Management Exercise programme. FaME is a cost-effective strength and balance exercise programme that has been shown in clinical trials to increase physical activity levels and prevent falls in older adults who are at high and lower risk of falls. The target population for this programme is Plymouth residents who are 65 years of age and over and have been deemed to be at heightened risk of falling.

For more information about the programme and to view a video showing the difference it makes to people in the community visit [Falls Team | Livewell Southwest](#)

New monthly news bulletin on University Hospitals Plymouth website

University Hospital Plymouth have begun compiling a monthly news bulletin called From Board to Ward. The June bulletin can be viewed here:

[From Board to Ward - June 2024 | Latest News | University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust \(plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk\)](https://plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk)

This monthly bulletin is well worth looking out for because it contains a good level of detail and talks about topics which are highly relevant and in the public interest. June's news items are about waits for orthopaedic patients, Same Day Emergency Care for urology patients, and the 4-hour target in the Emergency Department.

Settling in support at home for people being discharged from hospital

NHS Devon and Plymouth City Council are jointly funding a new procurement through the Better Care Fund to support vulnerable patients being discharged from hospital. The new service will be tendered over the Summer and Autumn to replace an existing service, with improvements to ensure greater flexibility to support 100 people per month for 3 years, from 1st April.

When someone has been admitted to hospital unexpectedly, especially if they have been on the ward for some time, the return home can be daunting. The assisted discharge support service will step in, on a needs-assessed basis and when family and friends are not available, to carry out non-statutory practical tasks such as ensuring food is available, the heating is on, and the fridge has been cleaned out. They will signpost or refer if further support is needed at the end of the intervention.

Providing this kind of practical and emotional support to vulnerable patients is important for ensuring they are safe at home in those important first few hours and days and helps to prevent deterioration leading to readmission to hospital.

ENDS