

Update from NHS Devon

September 2024

Annual report and accounts

The annual report and accounts of NHS Devon will be presented to the NHS Devon Board at its meeting on 18 September. Agenda papers will be published on 11 September.

2023/24 marked NHS Devon's first full year as an Integrated Care Board, following the transition from NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group in July 2022.

As a new organisation it has needed to adapt its work to respond to changing responsibilities and the increasing pressures on services, including an unsustainable underlying financial deficit.

The annual report sets out how, while NHS Devon is making encouraging progress in some areas, there are others, such as access to urgent and emergency care, where significantly improve performance is needed.

Finance update

NHS Devon has submitted a financial plan for 2024/25 which has a total system deficit of £80 million. The plan includes a savings requirement of £213 million, which is in line with that required in 2023/24. The plan assumes that there will be no cost in relation to Industrial Action.

Organisational change process

NHS Devon is undergoing an organisational change process to bring costs into line and comply with a central requirement for all integrated care boards to reduce their running costs by 30%.

The consultation period for phase two of the process is complete and Executives agreed the new structures in July. NHS Devon is preparing to share final structures and consultation feedback with staff in early September.

As part of the implementation of phase one of the process, Chris Morley has been appointed as NHS Devon's locality director for Plymouth. Having worked for NHS

Devon for many years, most recently as the interim locality director for Plymouth, Chris has wide-ranging experience in the role and the local area.

Chris' appointment means that NHS Devon now has all three locality directors in place:

- Plymouth – Chris Morley
- North and East – Lou Higgins
- South and West – Karen Barry

General practice collective action

GP practices have begun taking collective action across the country as of 1 August.

The local picture in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay is emerging gradually and, given the variety of actions that practices can take, this is a complex and changing position. Forecasting the impact therefore remains very complex.

Practices are doing their own messaging to patients on practice-specific arrangements.

NHS Devon is working with NHS England and system partners to monitor activity to ensure care continues to be delivered safely and that reasonable needs of patients continue to be met, alongside the other contractual requirements.

NHS Devon is holding weekly incident management meetings with primary care and acute partners to understand the implications of collective action and look at mitigating actions that be taken.

Bulletins and briefings have been sent to practices and stakeholders on the latest position and supporting materials – as well as a website page for the public.

The key message in our communications is that practices are open, and that people should continue to access them.

Winter communications strategy

One Devon takes a system approach to winter communications planning to ensure a consistent approach to winter campaigns across both health and care services.

Communications are coordinated with a Devon-wide strategy, which includes themed weeks to ensure a consistent approach for maximum affect.

The national NHS winter campaign has been designed to reach the most vulnerable groups in our society providing them with clear, practical guidance on what they can do to stay as healthy as possible.

Messages are based on preventing infections (e.g., through effective hand and respiratory hygiene) and staying healthy, encouraging seasonal vaccine uptake,

particularly amongst those at greatest risk and those experiencing health inequalities, and knowing which service you need, with a focus on helping to keep the elderly or those with long-term health conditions out of hospital.

At a local level, the system also uses the national branding and messages to target those areas where there is a need to raise awareness or increase communications efforts. The Devon campaign aims to ease seasonal pressure on NHS services. It is designed to ensure that people who are most at-risk of preventable emergency admission to hospital are aware of and, where possible, are motivated to take, actions that may avoid admission this winter.

This plan supports the system's ambition to focus on addressing inequalities in uptake of vaccinations with a particular focus on areas of greatest need and defined cohorts who may be least likely to access vaccination and at-risk groups at higher risk of severe disease.

System priority areas for winter communications for 2024/25

- **NHS 111** – choose well and behaviour change campaign to encourage contacting 111 before attending ED (online and phone)
- **Seasonal vaccinations** – Increase uptake in all eligible groups for flu, Covid-19 and RSV, with focus on outreach and health inequalities
- **GP access** – Primary Care Access Recovery Plan: NHS App functionality, increasing self-directed care, implementing 'Modern General Practice Access', better digital telephony, care navigation, larger multidisciplinary teams
- **Pharmacy and self-care** – promoting Pharmacy First for minor illness, raising awareness of expanded pharmacy services, and local self-care campaign "Treatment starts at home"
- **Digital** – online and video consultations, NHS app, NHS Quicker, ORCHA health and wellbeing app library, HANDi paediatric app
- **Mental health** - support available for people, especially as we approach Christmas and New Year, 24/7 crisis lines, crisis cafes and talking therapies services
- **Inequalities** – focus on diverse groups, working with local communities and community champions to undertake engagement and insight work, ensuring services are inclusive, translated, and easy read documentation. Support to access services and information outside of digital platforms, particularly for people with learning and/or physical disabilities
- **Early discharge** – system-wide campaign to support early discharge from hospital and improve flow
- **Minor injury units and urgent treatment centres** – localised campaigns by providers to promote MIU/UTC offer.

End-of-life review group

Supporting people who require end-of-life care and their families is hugely important to us. Local NHS partners want to see palliative and end-of-life care services across

Devon that are sustainable and consistent in terms of access, experience and outcome for individuals, their families and those delivering care.

As part of this, NHS Devon has been engaging with hospices and other organisations who are involved with end-of-life care and have established a task and finish group led by Lou Higgins, locality director for north and east. The group will review evidence and guidance, assess Devon's position against this, and make recommendations on a future commissioning model, as well as creating an end-of-life care collaborative to advise NHS Devon on future long-term commissioning arrangements.

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