

Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee 4 February 2020 Northumberland Primary Care Strategy and Associated Developments

Primary Care Services are the bedrock of health and care in Northumberland with over 1.5 million patient contacts per year, equating to nearly 29,000 patient contacts a week and providing over 90% of all care in the system. The care offered includes face to face appointments, home visits, telephone appointments and now also includes digital access options such as online consultations. The volume of patients seen has increased by 10% over the last five years.

Primary care teams are made up of General Practitioners (GPs), practice nurses, practice managers and they also work with a wide range of other professions such as community nursing, social care, social prescribers, pharmacists, physiotherapists and community paramedics to name a few.

There are 41 practices across Northumberland and 1 July 2019 saw the launch of Primary Care Networks with 6 established across the county extending in size from 30,000 to nearly 90,000 people.

While GP practices have been finding different ways of working together over many years – for example in super-partnerships, federations, clusters and networks – the NHS long-term plan and the new five-year framework for the GP contract, published in January 2019, put a more formal structure around this way of working, but without creating new statutory bodies through the creation of Primary Care Networks.

Primary Care Networks form a key building block of the NHS long-term plan. Bringing general practices together to work at scale has been a national policy priority for some years for a range of reasons, including improving the ability of practices to recruit and retain staff; to manage financial and estates pressures; to provide a wider range of services to patients and to more easily integrate with the wider health and care system.

Primary Care Networks have the potential to benefit patients by offering improved access and extending the range of services available to them, and by helping to integrate primary care with wider health and community services.

The presentation to OSC will provide the current context, challenges and opportunities for primary care and will outline the strategic direction and what this means for the shape of future care for the people of Northumberland.

Primary Care Vision for Northumberland:

Clinicians are working in practices they are proud of, delivering care to patients in a wider truly integrated team.

Networks of practices are working together; integrated with care teams from community, secondary care, social care and the voluntary sector.

New structures and workforce models are in place to allow clinicians to spend more time with their patients, with greater continuity of care and higher quality care for their patients.

The system allows easy access to the right clinician at the right time, whilst patients with complex needs are managed proactively in the community by a wider multidisciplinary team headed up by their GP and appropriate specialist. Everything is underpinned by a shared clinical record.