

# Access to Primary Care in Northumberland

Northumberland County Council  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1 February 2022

Dr Graham Syers



“I can’t get an  
appointment  
with my GP”

## **“can’t get”**

- Many people complain of engaged phonelines
- Practices are often full and only dealing with urgent problems
- There isn’t an appointment at a convenient time
- I don’t like using online appointment systems

## **“an appointment”**

- I want to see a GP face to face
- I don’t like using or find using the telephone difficult

## **“my GP”**

- I don’t know the doctors at my surgery anymore

## **“why do reception staff ask about why I’m ringing...?”**

- I know I need a Doctor
- Feeling disappointment if offered an alternative professional/ solution
- **“It doesn’t matter if I can’t make the appointment”**
- I feel better having an appointment just in case I need one
- Someone else will fill my slot they are so busy

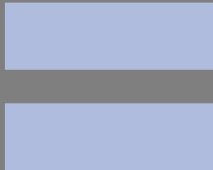
“Why do things have to change?”



**Increased  
Demand**



**Reduced  
Capacity**



**Poorer  
Access**

# Transformation

## Build capacity

- Recruit and retain a wider team
- Develop a broader skillset which is more resilient
- Working at scale across practices
- Develop estate

## Primary Care Networks

Groupings of practices with a shared management team developing services and workforce across practices with the aim of improving the health and wellbeing for the communities they serve

## Learn from COVID

- Provide a range of appointment options to meet differing needs.
- Reduce travel
- Improve communication options - email consultations , text messaging and photos or video when appropriate

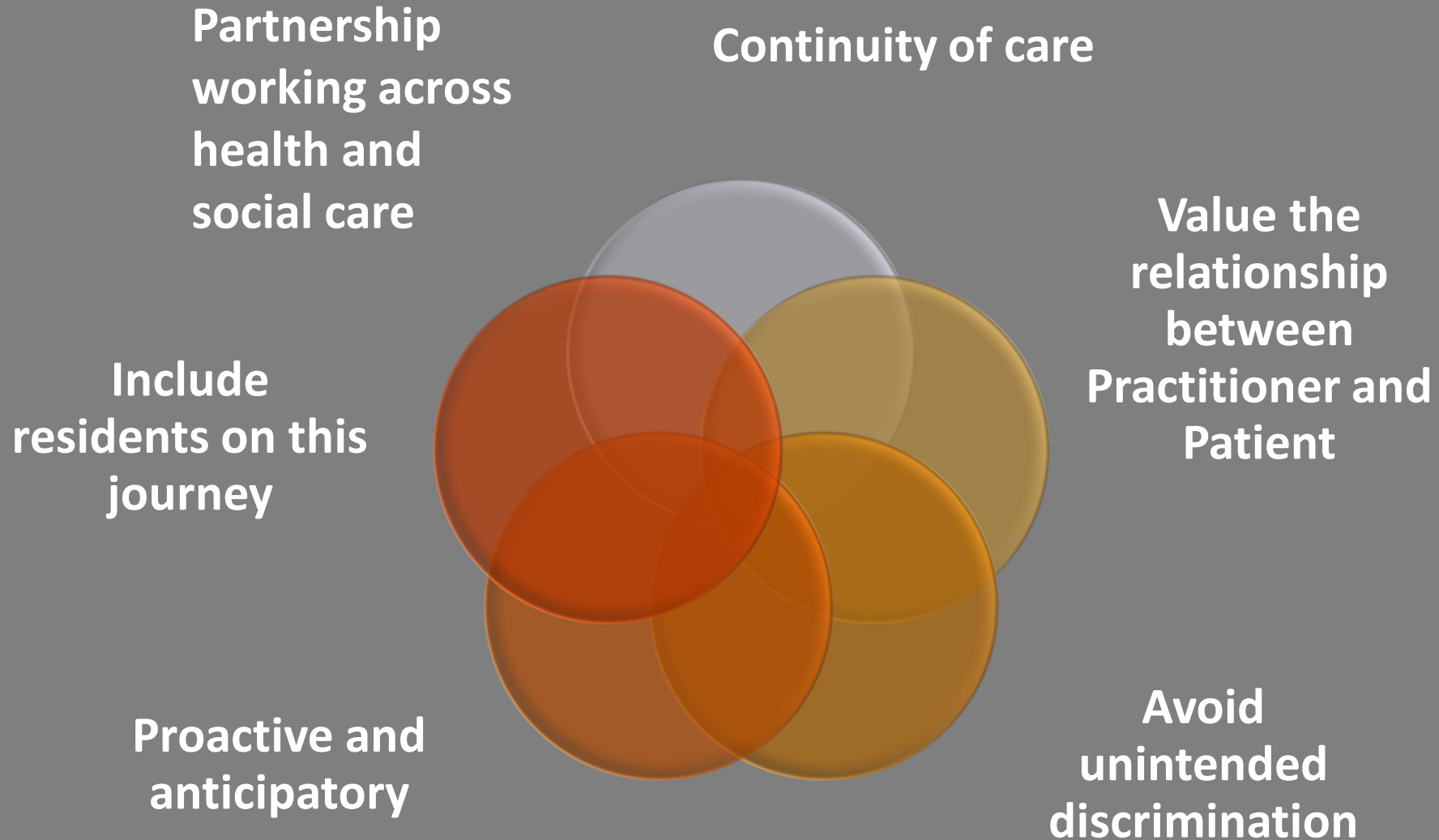
## Language / Terminology

- GP, Partner, Locum
- Primary care, General practice
- Community Services, Neighbourhood team
- Practice nurse, Nurse practitioner, Community Nurse
- Social prescriber, Health coaches

## Be more efficient

- Use technology to improve booking experience
- Use care navigation or other tested systems
- Make every contact count

# Underlying principles



# Working with our residents



- We will be engaging with residents and practices using Explain Market Research
- We need to avoid polarising views
- Local Councillors can help by helping residents engage with their local surgeries
- Patient Participation Groups are a good starting point but may not reflect practice population
- New support has come through the community response to COVID and vaccination, encourage continued support in new ways



“How can I get the help I need?”

