

Cabinet Secretary
for Health and
Wellbeing
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Thank you for taking part in this discussion on the priorities for health and wellbeing in Scotland. Whether you comment by

Nicola Sturgeon MSP
Deputy First Minister &
Cabinet Secretary for Health
& Wellbeing

letter, e-mail or personally, at one of the meetings being held

throughout Scotland, I and my colleagues are looking forward to receiving your views. We are committed to ensuring that they are taken into account as we develop our Action Plan for the future.

In 2005 NHSScotland staff and patients worked together to help produce the document 'Building a Health Service: Fit for the Future'. This explained the challenges facing NHSScotland and made a series of recommendations on how good medical care could be provided for the early 21st Century.

A great deal has already been achieved but we want to speed up the improvement process. That is why we are setting out to develop our Action Plan and asking for your input into its development. We want to encourage everybody to share ideas and use their expertise and energies to give

Scotland the healthcare system it deserves.

The new Scottish Government is determined to ensure more effective working across Government. We have expanded the Health and Wellbeing portfolio to include issues such as sport, housing, regeneration, social inclusion, homelessness and poverty and are looking to build upon the many good examples of collaborative working that are already taking place at community level.

In Health and Wellbeing we are determined to improve patients' experiences of care, get the best possible value for money, encourage people to take responsibility for their own health, tackle inequalities and foster continuous improvements in the services we provide.

Our Action Plan will be published in December and we want you to be part of making it a success. This Newsletter summarises the 7 main themes highlighted in our discussion paper and raises issues that you may like to consider and discuss with us. It's your health service – so please take this opportunity to have your say.



“It's Your Health Service – so please take this opportunity to have your say”

What are the Challenges ?

Improving your Experience of Care

We are determined to put patients and carers at the centre of our health service. We believe that there is much to learn from what patients and their carers can tell us about their experiences of using our services. We therefore want to listen and use what people tell us as a driver for change.

Extended patient involvement includes our commitment to:

- introduce direct elections to NHS Boards;
- make the best use of clinical skills, to the good of patients;
- set out, and enforce standards related to such issues as waiting time guarantees, individual healthcare plans, easy access to information and efficient handling of complaints;
- ensure any changes in services are robustly examined in advance and sanctioned only if they will be of value;
- ensure that the transport system supports people who use our services;
- improve access to health services by developing primary care and community hospitals, encouraging more flexible opening hours for GP practices and extending the role of community pharmacies;
- introduce new, safe and sustainable health services in remote and rural areas with working links between Rural General Hospitals and highly specialised units in major cities.

Best Value

NHSScotland has a duty to use public money wisely. As we move into a period of reduced increases in Government spending, it will be even more important to prioritise those

actions that bring greatest benefit to patients and identify and make efficiency savings wherever possible. In doing this we must achieve an appropriate balance between consistency in quality and the ability to vary services in response to local needs. Resources must be directed into local facilities wherever possible and services must be sustainable well into the future. To ensure the best value for money we need to discuss:

- raising standards of performance across the country;
- encouraging team working and liaison with local communities;
- introducing new and different roles in areas such as Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professional Consultants;
- removing traditional boundaries so that premises and resources can be shared with other organisations where it makes sense;
- pursuing an investment strategy built on co-operation between public and voluntary sector organisations;
- negotiating contracts in such a way that patients and the public purse get the best possible deal from private sector suppliers.

Taking Responsibility

We want to help people sustain and improve their health by taking more personal responsibility for their wellbeing through, for example, weight management, stopping smoking and more sensible drinking. Such efforts can be supported by NHS professionals and activities, but cannot be a matter for NHSScotland alone.

We need to discuss how best to:

- modernise Scotland's health protection legislation, ensuring new

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- threats such as E Coli and pandemic flu can be combated;
- deliver effective information campaigns;
- increase participation in sport and physical activity;
- achieve more physical activity opportunities for Scottish schoolchildren;
- extend entitlement to free school meals;
- attract and retain dental professionals, developing the school dental service, and creating a third Scottish Dental School in Aberdeen;
- encourage full community use of school sporting facilities.

Tackling Health Inequalities

A task force led by Shona Robison, The Minister for Public Health, has been set up to identify and set priorities for practical action to reduce the most significant health inequalities in Scotland. It is examining opportunities to work more effectively with the public, private and voluntary sectors in reducing the differences in people's environments, incomes, employment, educational attainment, skills, housing and other issues that have the biggest impact on health. The task force will report to the Cabinet by May 2008. Potential initiatives include:

- ensuring primary care and other resources are targeted appropriately;
- taking effective action on problems such as quality of life, deprivation, homelessness, addiction and family environments in early life;
- appreciating and acting on the specific needs of deprived communities and individuals like those with mental illnesses, ex-offenders, the homeless and children of drug misusing parents;
- maintaining effective treatments for drug users in community settings

and as part of the criminal justice system;

- developing a national strategy on race equality and how to respond to an ageing population.

Anticipatory Care and Long Term Conditions

We recognise that the challenge of developing from a reactive system of healthcare to one which anticipates and prevents problems before they develop, requires a significant change in attitudes. We need to identify and offer personal solutions for long term physical and mental health conditions, with better support and information for patients and carers which is not limited by organisational boundaries. This approach is justified by changes currently being made in social work and requires co-ordination with the voluntary sector. Our discussions should include ways in which we:

- provide intensive case management especially for the most vulnerable;
- use education and new technology to encourage improvements in services;
- make the best use of the expertise available in voluntary organisations;
- abolish prescription charges;
- implement the commitment to reduce anti-depressant prescribing by 10%;
- introduce individual health plans for school pupils.

The Best Possible Start

Good parenting is fundamental to the development of a child's physical and mental health and wellbeing. By providing appropriate support from conception through to the first 3 years of a child's life, we can help all our children realise their potential.

Particular support will be provided for young families in deprived areas.

There is increasing evidence that early

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intervention can help improve lifetime wellbeing and that such investment can encourage educational attainment and produce confident, balanced and resilient citizens. We are particularly determined to focus support on children with multiple or complex needs and to give each one the opportunity they deserve. We need to discuss ways to:

- implement Delivering a Healthy Future, our action plan for improving children's and young people's health;
- help pregnant women quit smoking and drinking;
- tackle drug misuse and ensure that the children of drugs misusing parents are identified and supported from birth;
- protect children from the stresses of domestic abuse;
- improve infant nutrition, including closing the gap between the rates of breastfeeding in our deprived and more affluent communities.

Continuous Improvement in Healthcare

NHSScotland should be known for continuous improvement and its relentless pursuit of quality. There has already been good progress in inpatient and day-case treatment, outpatients', heart bypass surgery and angioplasty, key diagnostic tests and accident and emergency services.

In our discussions we need to look at:

- reducing the gap between GP referral and treatment to 18 weeks and introduce individual waiting time guarantees;
- continued investment in improving staff skills, training opportunities;
- ensuring that services match the individual circumstances of people's lives, whatever they are;
- making the best use of scientific advances;
- working to build, and sustain, a culture of safety underpinned by high quality clinical standards;
- renewing our efforts to tackle Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI), such as examining the case for pre-admittance screening for MRSA across Scotland;
- developing more local diagnostic facilities, while making tests available at an earlier stage in patients' care;
- developing a new strategy for eHealth by Spring 2008, exploiting new technologies to everyone's benefit.

How Do I Get Involved?

There are a number of ways in which you can take part:

- By writing to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, Nicola Sturgeon at: betterhealthbettercare@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or by post to: Better Health, Better Care Consultation, Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG
If you do write to us by post or email, **please complete and return the Respondent Information Form** which is enclosed in this Newsletter or can be found on our Web site at www.scotland.gov.uk/betterhealthbettercare.
- By participating in one of the discussions taking place across Scotland, details on the above website.

For the location of public internet access points Freephone 0800 77 1234

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