

What's in the new NHS Long Term Plan that is directly relevant to young people's health?

The new NHS Long Term Plan, published on 7 January 2019, sets out new commitments for action to improve the nation's health outcomes. The Association for Young People's Health focuses on improving health outcomes and health services for 10-24 year olds. This briefing summarises our first impressions of the particular proposals that may impact on this age group to assist those working in the young people's health field. It does not provide any commentary on the plan.

As part of the stakeholder consultations for the new Plan young people were asked what they thought it should include. In sessions run by the Young People's Health Partnership, the NHS Youth Forum and the British Youth Council, young people gave us a clear steer. We have organised our summary under the specific headings they gave us where they wanted to see progress. These included more funding for young people, increasing mental health services, improving how easy it is to see a doctor, linking up more with schools, encouraging regular checks even if nothing is wrong, more open-minded doctors, more understanding and welcoming services, more focus on particular groups of young people, and more integrated services.

All numbers in brackets refer to specific paragraphs in the Plan.

Overall

The new NHS Long Term Plan specifically refers to "intensifying the NHS's focus on children's health" (3.2) and sets out "new action to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people" (3.7). Most importantly the plan includes a commitment to create a Children and Young People's Transformation Programme to oversee the delivery of the commitments to children and young people (3.42). This includes an aim "...to move towards service delivery models for young people that offer person centred and age appropriate care for mental and physical health needs, rather than an arbitrary transition to adult services based on age not need " (3.47).

More funding for young people

- Commitment that funding for children and young people's mental health services will grow faster than both overall NHS funding and total mental health spending (3.24)
- Improved funding of children's palliative and end of life care (3.41)

Improving mental health services

- By 2023/24, at least 345,000 children and young people 0-25 will access support (via NHS or school/college) in addition to promises already made elsewhere (3.25)

- By 2029, 100% of children and young people to be able to access specialist care if they need it (3.25)
- More investment in eating disorder services and mental health crisis support for children and young people. Single point of entry for crisis through NHS111. (3.26 and 3.27)
- Focus on learning disability & autism (3.31-3.36)
- Increased mental health investment for adults, which will include young people aged 18-24 (3.89)
- Continued expansion of access to IAPT services for adults which will include young people aged 18-24 (3.91)
- Better crisis care and improved community care for adults, which will include young people aged 18-24 (3.93), including community-based mental health crisis response (3.96 – 3.98)
- Focus on improving transition for 18-25 year olds with mental health problems (3.30)

Improving how easy it is to see a doctor

- Reduction in waiting times for specialist services, both for eating disorders (3.26), mental health generally (3.28) and for young people with learning disability, autism or both (3.33)

Link up more with schools

- Already part of the Green Paper in relation to Children and Young People’s Mental Health (3.28)

Encourage regular checks even if nothing is wrong

- Eyesight, hearing and dental checks for children with learning disabilities in special residential schools (2.31, 3.32)
- Improved uptake of annual health check in primary care for people aged over 14 with a learning disability (3.31)

More open-minded doctors, more understanding and welcoming services

- Improvement in inpatient facilities for young people with learning disability, autism or both (3.36)
- Commitment to seek the views of patients under 16 “to ensure the NHS continues to offer the best services for children and young people” (3.39)

More focus on particular groups of young people (young adults and young people with protected characteristics)

- Enhanced and targeted care for most vulnerable mothers and babies – and this will include teenage mothers (2.28)
- Smoking cessation support for women who smoke during pregnancy (will include teenage mothers) (2.29)
- Introduction of ‘Quality marks’ for carer-friendly GP practices, which will include young carers (2.33)
- Roll out ‘top tips’ for young carers across primary care (2.35)
- Specialist pre-term birth clinics to help care for women with heightened risk of pre-term birth, including younger mothers (3.11)
- Mental Health Support Teams in schools and colleges will receive information and training to help them support LGBT+ individuals & children in care (part of Green Paper, 3.28)

- New services (in selected areas) for children who have complex needs that are not currently being met, including 6,000 highly vulnerable children with complex trauma (3.29)
- Enhanced support across the NHS for children and young people with a learning disability, autism or both (3.32)

Integrated services

- Increased funding for primary care networks & primary/community hubs – Expanded neighbourhood teams will comprise a range of staff such as GPs, pharmacists, district nurses, community geriatricians, dementia workers and AHPs such as physiotherapists and podiatrists/chiropractors, joined by social care and the voluntary sector (1.9)
- Revised GP Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) will support more personalised care (1.11)
- Local areas to design and implement models of care that are age appropriate, closer to home and bring together physical and mental health services (3.44)
- Development of new model of comprehensive care for 0-25 year olds that “reaches across” mental health services for children and young people (3.30)
- Designated keyworker for young people with learning disability, autism & most complex needs (3.33)
- More personalised care in the community, closer to home, particularly for young people with learning disability, autism or both (3.35)
- Single point of entry for mental health crisis services through NHS 111 (3.27)

Other initiatives that don’t fall under the headings provided by young people in the consultation but that should benefit them

- Digital-first primary care to become a new option for every patient improving fast access to convenient primary care (1.44)
- Increase in local providers’ ability to control local budgets (3.34)
- Reduction in numbers of young people with learning disability, autism or both in an inpatient facility (3.34)
- Access to most up to date treatments for cancer for children and young people, including genome sequencing, CAR-T therapies and proton beam therapy (3.38)
- Extension of HPV vaccination to boys aged 12 and 13 (3.40)
- Roll out of clinical networks for children with long-term conditions such as asthma, epilepsy and diabetes (3.45)
- Roll-out of access to glucose monitors for all patients with type 1 diabetes (3.80)
- More support for those with respiratory disease to receive the right medicine, including those with asthma (3.86)

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