

Report of the Cabinet Member Adult Social Care and Health Services

Introduction

I have been asked by Councillor Greenslade to report on 'Accountable Care Systems'.

Response

Integrating the Health and Care System in Devon

Members have asked for information on integration and the development of 'Accountable Care Systems' in Devon. We are pleased to provide the attached briefing and look forward to further discussions as we develop this partnership.

Firstly though, it's important to explain what Accountable Care Systems are, and more importantly what they're not.

Accountable Care Systems are now more commonly known nationally as Integrated Care Systems, so that's the term we're using. At its simplest, an Integrated Care System is way of working, collaboratively, between a range of health and social care organisations, to help improve people's health.

It's when organisations work together in a shared way; sharing budgets, staff, resources where appropriate, to best meet people's needs.

What it's not, and Members need assurance of this, is a creation of a new organisation, or some body seen as being undemocratic, or 'privatisation by the back door'.

It's important to draw that distinction, because there is criticism at a national level that creating new commissioning organisations can lead to a place where people's care needs come second to the needs of those undemocratic organisations.

And that's not a place that Devon has any intention of going.

So, what is it, and why is it better?

By working collaboratively with a range of organisations, Integrated Care Systems (ICS) aim to help people stay healthy, tackling the causes of illness and wider factors that affect health such as education and housing.

Commissioners and providers of acute hospital and community services, primary care, mental health and social care work increasingly in partnership to plan, finance and run services.

From the patient or service users' point of view, they see a joined-up health and social care service that works for them. Their care, however simple or complex it is, is planned. And the Council, the CCGs, the hospitals, the GPs, are all working together to that same plan.

It makes common sense to work together. It's not just that there's a statutory obligation for health and social care organisations to do so.

And it's not a new concept. Integration of care is something that we in Devon have been providing for some years, with front line health and social care staff working together in the same teams. So, an Integrated Care System builds on the solid progress that's already established.

The NHS Constitution and Local Authority Constitution will remain at the heart of everything we do, meaning anyone can receive high-quality NHS care, free at the point of access, whenever they need it. People will still see a GP when they need it and there will still be hospital care. Social care will continue to operate as it does now but integration will mean services are increasingly organised around the needs of individuals and not organisational boundaries.

Working in partnership across a wide range of services, people will be helped to stay healthy, receive more support and treatment at home rather than having to go into hospital if it's not necessary, and see their GP more quickly.

If people do need to be admitted to hospital, they will be supported to get home quickly with the support they need.

With NHS and Local Authorities now working more closely together than ever, we should give our doctors, nurses and social care staff the best chance of success by enhancing our partnership working.

Councillor Andrew Leadbetter
Cabinet Member
Adult Social Care and Health Services