

PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE IN DEVON

Report from the Head of Adult Commissioning and Health

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendation: that Cabinet adopt the proposed policy 'Promoting Independence in Devon'.

1. The Importance of Promoting Independence

- 1.1 Promoting independence and prevention are emphasised as duties for local authorities in legislation relating to adult social care, children's services and public health functions including in the Care Act 2014.
- 1.2 Local authorities and their partners, including NHS bodies in their area, are required to co-operate in fulfilling these duties.
- 1.3 Promoting independence and prevention are also key themes running through the Wider Devon Sustainability and Transformation Plan which sets out ambitious plans to improve health and care services and outcomes for people across Devon in a way that is clinically and financially sustainable
- 1.4 Losing independence is one of people's greatest fears: a survey on attitudes to ageing in the UK found that the two greatest concerns were ill health and losing independence and/or becoming dependent on others
- 1.5 Engagement with people in Devon has confirmed that most wish to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible. When non institutional solutions to care and health needs are available and people are confident in them, they are the preferred solutions to meeting need.
- 1.6 The health and care system locally and nationally is under pressure as a result of rising demand, increasing complexity of need, rising costs and limited resources.
- 1.7 Devon County Council is providing more social care than is typical in similar Local Authorities and the difference is not fully explained by our population profile.
- 1.8 While we have a relatively aged and ageing population in Devon, we are also experiencing rising demand for our services from younger adults with complex needs such as learning disabilities.

- 1.9 Similarly, Devon is experiencing increasing demands and pressures in the health system that is resulting in avoidable growth in dependency with people spending more time in hospital than is clinically necessary.

2. What is independence

- 2.1 'Promoting independence' means enabling as many residents as possible to stay healthy and active in their communities for as long as possible with the minimal necessary reliance on publicly funded health and care services.
- 2.2 Independence is enabled through personal resilience and resourcefulness, strong family and social relationships, and access to community opportunities and support.
- 2.3 The skills and abilities to overcome crises and other challenges are gained through drawing on personal strengths and experiences as well as support from family, friends and others in the community.
- 2.4 Positive childhood experiences develop resilience and the ability to maintain supportive networks. These networks can prevent, reduce and delay the onset and impact of emotional and physical crises throughout people's lives.
- 2.5 Being connected to the local community can be at the heart of people's sense of wellbeing and can make an essential contribution to physical health and resilience. Access to infrastructures that enable physical mobility and digital communication is key to maintaining family and social relationships.
- 2.6 Being employed and living in appropriate housing conducive to health and wellbeing are important enablers of independence. They can determine the context in which people experience and overcome physical and mental health challenges.

3. How 'promoting independence' is being delivered across Devon

3.1 Devon County Council

- 3.1.1 Devon County Council's 'Operating Model' includes the following principles that all of our strategies should follow:

- Focus on shared outcomes by developing an outcomes framework based on 'Better Together', and working as one council and in partnership to achieve it;
- Reduce future demand and costs by moving resources from acute services towards prevention and early intervention;
- Enable citizens and communities to manage their own wellbeing by personalising more services, offering more opportunities for communities to support themselves, and accelerating the devolution of power and resources;
- Encourage the public, community, voluntary and private sectors to work better together to achieve outcomes and extend choice.

- 3.1.2 The proposed new 'Promoting Independence' policy in Appendix A builds on these principles.

- 3.1.3 The new policy will not change any existing duties or policies but provides a statement of our increased emphasis on working with people, communities and partners to promote independence in Devon.
- 3.1.4 Our approach to promoting independence will be to encourage and enable people to use universal services and sources of community and social support as solutions to their needs wherever possible.

Adult Care and Health

- 3.1.5 The Adult Care and Health functions have developed a 'Promoting Independence in Devon' plan to ensure that the principles of promoting independence run through their commissioning strategies and operational practice.
- 3.1.6 Staff training is already emphasising a preventative and strength base approach and key adult social care policies and guidance are being restated with a focus on helping people to maximise their independence.

Children's Services

- 3.1.7 Helping children and young people to grow up in safe and nurturing environments and develop resilience enables them to prepare for independence as adults.
- 3.1.8 The principles outlined in this paper and in the Policy can be used to support young people to move into adulthood equipped with the resources and abilities they need to be as independent as possible.

Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity

- 3.1.9 The Promoting Independence Policy is based on the needs of our population as set out in [Devon's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#).
- 3.1.10 Supporting people to avoid illness and make healthy lifestyle choices through initiatives such as onesmallstep.org.uk promotes independence and helps to prevent, reduce and delay the need for other health or social care services.
- 3.1.11 Communities that are connected, resilient and empowered to represent themselves are more likely to provide mutual support to members of those communities as well as reaching out to others.
- 3.1.12 Opportunities and encouragement to volunteer can make significant contributions to the health and wellbeing of volunteers as well as those they are providing help to.
- 3.1.13 Approaches to community development and social prescribing are being developed through [Integrated Care For Exeter \(ICE\)](#) with the potential to extend the learning across the county.
- 3.1.14 Enabling people to travel safely, including using public transport, is an important factor in developing social and life skills and maintaining the

social connections that are essential to independence e.g. with the initial support of travel trainers.

Information and Communication

3.1.15 Devon County Council and its partners have a key role to play ensuring people have access to information, advice and guidance that will enable them to make healthy lifestyle choices.

3.1.16 We provide information online, by telephone and in person to support people plan for when their health and care needs may increase, and to manage new health and care needs as they arise.

3.1.17 Support information and advice may be accessed from a range of other sources without the need to contact individual council or health services directly. These include:

- Developing [Devon's accessible information and advice service](#)
- The pinpointdevon.co.uk directory of community services in Devon;
- The onesmallstep.org.uk service to help the people of Devon make healthier lifestyle choices;
- [NHS Choices](#);
- Online and helpline information from National and local charities and independent organisations.

3.2 Partnership working, including with the NHS

3.2.1 We aspire to develop a system-wide approach to supporting people to prevent, reduce and delay the need for care and support based on the principles of promoting independence.

3.2.2 The proposed policy is a model that could be adopted and adapted by other local authorities and NHS bodies in the Wider Devon health and care system.

3.2.3 The aims of the policy are aligned with and underpin major strategic plans across Devon including:

- [The Wider Devon Sustainability and Transformation Plan](#);
- Employment, economy, enterprise and investment strategies such as the [Heart of the South-West Productivity Plan](#).

3.2.4 All public services, including those that make-up Devon's health and care system, have a role in promoting independence, enabling people to feel confident that they can take responsibility for their health and needs, and that they can be empowered to do so within their community.

3.2.5 All services need to be able to provide quality and timely information and advice on prevention and self-care so people feel empowered to meet their own needs and access support that will maximise their independence.

3.2.6 We have strong relationships across the health and care system in Devon and can build on a range of successful initiatives already promoting independence, these include:

- [Integrated Care For Exeter \(ICE\)](#) uses a collaborative approach to ensure that people's independence is maximised in the Exeter area.
- Devon County Council's [Public Health service has received international recognition](#) for working collaboratively with community and environmental organisation to help promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging and enabling use of Devon's natural environment.
- The Improving Access to Psychological Treatments (IAPT) services is enabling people in Devon with common mental health problems to access support to maintain or return to employment and enter into education or training.
- Information, advice and support services to carers.
- Our network of dementia cafes encouraging mutual support.

3.2.7 Examples of how front line staff in all public services can help to promote independence are given in Appendix B.

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Electoral Divisions: All

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

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<i>Background Paper</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>File Reference</i>
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Nil

Appendix A

Promoting Independence Policy

1. Introduction

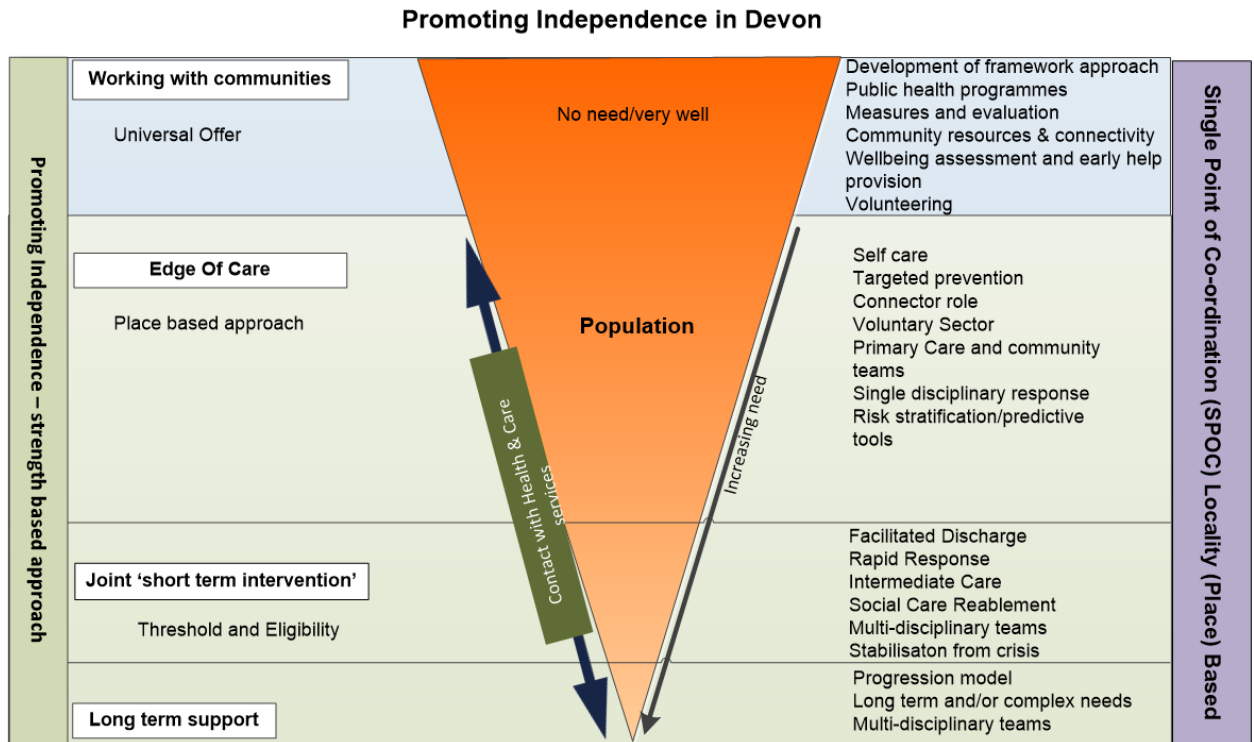
- 1.1 Promoting independence and prevention are emphasised as duties for local authorities in legislation relating to its adult social care, children's services and public health functions including in the Care Act 2014.
- 1.2 Local authorities and their partners including NHS bodies in their area are required to co-operate in fulfilling these duties.
- 1.3 This Promoting Independence Policy is based on the needs of our population as set out in Devon's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment JSNA and its aims are aligned with and underpin major strategic plans including the Wider Devon Sustainability and Transformation Plan.
- 1.4 This policy recognises that:
 - 1.4.1 Losing independence is one of people's greatest fears.
 - 1.4.2 People consistently tell us that they wish to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible.
 - 1.4.3 Evidence tells us that the support we provide can often make someone more dependent on care, rather than aiding recovery and allowing them to overcome problems for themselves.
 - 1.4.4 Supporting people to be independent for longer enables us to better manage demand for our services, ensuring our limited resources are focussed on those with greatest need.

2. Defining promoting independence

- 2.1 'Promoting independence' means enabling as many residents as possible to stay healthy and active in their communities for as long as possible with the minimal necessary reliance on publicly funded health and care services.
- 2.2 There are four key aspects to promoting independence:
 - **Personal strengths and preferences**
We will focus on people's strengths and the things that matter to them, encouraging them to draw on their own resources to build resilience and achieve their desired outcomes.
 - **Relationships**
We will support people to maintain and develop rewarding social and family relationships.
 - **Community links**
We will enable people to make connections with other people, groups and universal services in their communities.
 - **Supportive communities**

We will work with partners to develop communities and community groups, and encourage them to make the most of their ability to support people.

2.3 The diagram below outlines the approach that Devon County Council is taking to promoting independence:



3. The policy

- 3.1 The new policy does not change any existing duties or policies but provides a statement of our increased emphasis on working with people, communities and partners in promoting independence in Devon.
- 3.2 We will continue to comply with our statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 to meet the eligible care needs of the most vulnerable adults where these cannot be met by other means.
- 3.3 The Care Act, along with legislation pertaining to children's services and public health, also requires councils to aim to prevent, reduce or delay the onset of health and care needs and to promote independence.
- 3.4 This Policy expresses how we will comply with these requirements to promote independence by enabling people to use universal services and sources of community and social support wherever possible and by developing models of care that best enable rehabilitation, reablement and recovery.
- 3.5 In doing so, we will endeavour to:
 - Work with people to enable them to use community and social support, universal service, technology and other resources to meet their needs and promote their wellbeing.

- Work with communities and service providers to develop their ability to support individuals efficiently and in a way that promotes their independence.
- Design services to enable better outcomes for people while ensuring their financial and clinical sustainability by managing demand.

Preparing children and young people for independence in adulthood

- 3.6 All children should have a good start in life with skills learnt and resilience developed to prepare them for a healthy and productive adulthood and to live well as they age. We will intervene early when this is not the case.
- 3.7 Our role is to support children to develop and sustain their social and leisure networks, whenever possible from within their home environment. Children will be supported to learn how to self-manage their own mental or physical health in preparation for transition into adulthood where they can be further supported to maintain their independence.

Resilient and independent people and communities

- 3.8 Our role is to guide people and their carers to maximise their opportunities for independence so that they feel a sense of purpose and can do the things that matter to them, whatever their circumstances.
- 3.9 We recognise the importance of a person's own home, community, social relationships and networks and how these can shape a person's identity and contribute to their independence. These areas of strength will be how and where the majority of people's needs are met in the first instance, without the need for formal care and support. We will focus on people's social networks as the reason and reward for improved independence.
- 3.10 We will continue to aim to enable people to access their community and sources of support. This will be achieved through facilitating travel, access and communication so people can maintain social relationships and networks.
- 3.11 We encourage a strengths based approach to self-care and support people to retain their independence for as long as possible by building on their own abilities, support from family and friends, and their wider community including the voluntary sector.
- 3.12 Where appropriate we will work with our partners to provide support to people so they can gain and remain in employment and live in housing that enables maximum independence.

Information and Communication

- 3.13 Quality advice and information is an empowering and important way of promoting independence. Devon County Council and other public services in Devon have a key role to play to ensuring people have access to information that will enable them to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- 3.14 We will provide information to help people plan for when their health and care needs may increase, and to manage new health and care needs as they arise. Information and advice may be accessed from a range of other

sources, without the need to contact individual council or health services directly.

- 3.15 Our role is to help enable people to access advice and information without the need to contact us in the first instance. However, when they do we will make good quality information and advice accessible that supports everyone to make healthy and positive lifestyle choices. This will enable independence into old age, this includes access to advice on planning for later life when needs may develop or increase.

We share the responsibility to make the right choices

- 3.16 We will aim to support and inspire individuals, families and communities to be resilient and independent by making the healthy and positive lifestyle choices the easiest choices.
- 3.17 Our role is to connect people to the best solutions that can help to delay or meet their needs. We fully embrace assistive and digital technology and online solutions where appropriate and encourage their use.
- 3.18 We will work jointly and collaboratively across our public sector partners to promote independence. We support people to make good decisions on key aspects of their life such as employment and housing so that the right conditions and environments are created to enable people with mental and physical health needs to learn and re-learn the skills necessary to remain in the community.

Early intervention and support when in crisis

- 3.19 When people are in need and in crisis, our role is to intervene early and provide support that builds on their existing strengths to maximise their independence.
- 3.20 Any support will focus on maximising opportunities for recovery and recuperation that supports a return to independence. This will initially be through short term interventions, adaptations, equipment and technology that help to prevent or delay the person's need for longer term support.

Reducing dependency and increasing cost effectiveness

- 3.21 People will receive the right support at the right time and in the right place so they can make progress in managing their disability or illness and lead lives with less dependency on public funded services.
- 3.22 We will seek out cost-effective solutions for people that will provide support in the most appropriate and efficient way. We need to be aware that funds are limited and so we must try to gain the most from the money that is available to us and ensure that it is spent wisely.

Strategic and operational planning and guidance

- 3.23 Our strategies, plans and operational guidance will support the principles of promoting independence set out in this policy wherever possible.

Appendix B

Examples of promoting independence in practice

- Providing timely and quality information, advice enabling people to understand and make the right lifestyle choice.
- Supporting prevention and wellbeing so people live longer and with more years free from disease and the need for public funded support
- Maximising opportunities for recovery and recuperation through short term interventions;
- Avoiding making life changing decisions about long term care when people are in crisis;
- Working with people's strengths and assets and those of their community
- Collaborating in partnership to deliver better personalised outcomes.
- Enabling opportunities for social relationships. The stories people tell reveals how other people shape their identity. Positive stories are made possible by positive relationships and supportive networks to which people belong. People may need targeted support to develop informal support.
- Recognising and promoting the potential for technology to facilitate social engagement and social networks for people with disabilities as well as being a source of practical help to support risk management and enhance confidence. Both are key in enabling social identity and independence.
- Recognising and respecting the multiple identities of each person. Encourage people to see themselves, for example, as a young woman, a music lover who likes to sing, someone makes fashion choices that reflect their identity, their ideas and ideals, someone who likes the beach or countryside, not just a person who may have care and support needs
- Recognising that fundamental human needs are not just physical and include all of the following:
 - positive relationships
 - a sense of belonging
 - individual autonomy
 - active involvement in decision-making
 - active engagement in community
 - using one's unique strengths in ways that provide a challenge
 - making a contribution.
- Encouraging people to try new things in a safe way that supports and rewards their efforts.
- Recognising that too much paid support may inhibit the development of freely given relationships with ordinary people. Providing confidence that the necessary support will be available in response to changes circumstances when needed.