

**QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
AT THE ICB ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON THE
28TH SEPTEMBER 2023**

Question

My concern, shared with others, is a desire for an updated Sexual Health service in Lincolnshire:

Greater availability in time and location of appointments and a postal testing service, quicker turnaround of results and prescriptions, and ease of prescription.

It is strange that other areas, often more metropolitan where services can be accessed within short distances and with better public transport links, have commissioned services like sh24.org.uk and yet Lincolnshire NHS, with its 1 Million population require patients to travel potential distances of 30+ miles to access services, has not.

I would also like to see a statement on the above and on the NHS service offer to LGBT+ people and also men who have sex with men (MSM) in terms of joined up holistic health concern approach taking in GP services and the sexual health service.

Response

Thank you for this question, for which a response has been helpfully provided by Lincolnshire County Council's Public Health Team, which holds the responsibility for commissioning comprehensive sexual health services for local people.

Sexual health services in Lincolnshire have been reviewed recently, in line with our routine programme of service reviews, for all the services we commission for local people. This review has included talking to a range of people who need and use the services as well as stakeholders from other organisations. As you might expect, some of the feedback we received from this review was similar to that contained in your question.

Following the review, the council has developed a new service specification for the relevant services and will shortly put this new service model and services out to tender. The newly commissioned integrated sexual health service is based on the recently published United Kingdom Health Security model service specification. The service will continue to provide interventions to prevent and treat HIV, through a partnership arrangement with the responsible NHS commissioners. This helps avoid service users needing to travel outside of the county for such interventions, unless they choose to.

One of the aspirations for the newly designed services is to improve access across Lincolnshire and offer services more locally. The new service includes aspects of remote testing to increase take up of testing away from clinics to better support sexual health needs and increase accessibility.

The new service will also include an enhanced digital offer, to reduce the need to travel to fixed sites where this is not necessary, whilst maintaining comprehensive face to face clinical appointments where needed and requested.

The services will continue to offer outreach support for those with the poorest sexual health outcomes, including LGBT+ people, those from the most deprived areas and those with other challenges to good sexual health. All of our services will be part of a newly formed sexual health network, to track the changing needs of service users and address gaps and problems which may appear over the life of the new service arrangements – keeping pace with national developments.

Thank you for this question, the council lead for these services is happy for us to provide you with his email address if you would like any further information.

Question

How is the ICB looking to develop a communication plan that will provide the public with a greater understanding of the changes across primary. How will this build their confidence and trust, particularly of their GP practices.

Response

Thank you for your question at the recent Annual General Meeting of the ICB regarding how we are looking to develop a communication plan that will provide the public with a greater understanding of the changes across primary care and with this build their confidence and trust particularly of their GP practices.

The model of GP has been largely unchanged for the last 75 years. In 2016 the NHS published the GP Forward View which outlined a plan to invest in and develop the service model for primary care. This included both a greater use of digital tools and introduction of new roles to support the development of a multi-disciplinary team service model. The plans outlined in the GP Forward view have been further developed as part of the report prepared by Clare Fuller – Next Steps for Integrating Primary Care and the recently published Primary Care Access Recovery Plan.

Whilst some of these developments commenced prior to the COVID pandemic in responding to the pandemic new models, which were introduced literally overnight. This meant that the opportunity to engage with the general public was lost. We also recognise that our messaging during the pandemic was that the changes were part of the response to the pandemic. As a result, we appreciate that the general public expected that as we re-opened services that access to GP would be the same as it had always been.

There have been numerous communication campaigns publishing the developments across primary care. We will continue to look at opportunities to support promotional campaigns, where we use a mixture of online and outdoor advertising platforms, e.g. social media, google ads, bus stops, billboards, etc to promote key health information. This will be organised so that they are available across the county and supported by practices. In addition, we continue to work with GP practices to redevelop their existing websites, create or develop a social media presence, and build a thriving patient participation group.

We understand though that whilst these are effective at raising awareness of new ways of working, they have limited impact on helping the public understand these such that they trust and have confidence in the different arrangements.

As part of our plans to support delivery of the national Primary Care Access Recovery plan we are looking at how we can create the space and opportunity for two-way communication which we consider will provide an opportunity for people to ask questions and learn more about the new ways of contacting practices, the increased range of services available and how multi-disciplinary teams work together.

We are currently planning a new initiative to develop a network of health and wellbeing community champions / advocates to support GP practices to share health promotion resources across their communities and encourage local people to be more involved in developing health services in their area and are delighted that *we have been awarded £100,000 from the ICS Research Engagement Network (REN) development programme to fund the initiative.*

We have developed a rolling campaign programme which will cover key health topics in the local press, e.g. how to access your GP practice and the different medical staff now working in your GP practice, which we hope will provide a balance to recent media reports.

In supporting the development of local health care services and primary care services, which will continue to develop and change, we understand that helping the public to understand these changes and have confidence that they will receive the care they need will require ongoing communication and engagement and are committed to developing the arrangements to facilitate this. If you have any thoughts from your role as Chair of the PPG we would welcome your support.