CREATING A HEALTHIER SCOTLAND

WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?
Improving the health and wellbeing of people in a safe, caring and respectful way remains the core purpose of Scotland’s health and social care services. Achieving this requires new ways of providing services and systems and a renewed focus on how best to support people to live well in their communities.

People’s needs and expectations are, rightly, very different from when the NHS was created in 1948. Caring for people when they need it remains an absolute priority; but nowadays people want to be more involved in and appropriately responsible for their own health and health care. In addition, advances in medicines, treatments and technologies have transformed how we live our lives. As a nation, we are living longer than ever before, but with more complex health and care needs.

We already have a shared vision that everyone is able to live longer, healthier lives at home or in a homely setting. The people of Scotland can play their part by taking responsibility for their own health and the health of their families.

Now is the right time to have the conversation about how services and systems should evolve to meet our needs. Now is the time to think about how we can support our communities and families to live healthier lives and prevent unnecessary illness.

We hope this leaflet, and the discussions that are underway and will follow, can help to identify, by the Autumn, key principles for the future shape of our health and social care.

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Good relationships are vital for people accessing health and social care services and support, including those nearing the end of life.

People must be at the heart of every decision. The vast majority of interactions with the health system are with family health practitioners based in the community - GPs, practice nurses, dentists, optometrists, midwives and pharmacists.

There are 25 million GP appointments alone in Scotland every year. These practitioners build continuing relationships with people and communities and support links to the social care and voluntary sectors. We want more care delivered locally, with more services organised around GP practices. This could mean:

More teams of health and care professionals working together in communities, reducing the need for visits to hospital.

Health professionals being able to support patients facing wider social issues which are having an impact on their health and wellbeing.

Specialist doctors and nurses supporting people in their own homes, care home or hospice, as well as in hospitals.

Clearer signposting, information and support so people know where to go for the most appropriate treatment.
Poor lifestyle choices result in too many early deaths in Scotland, particularly among those living with long term conditions or at higher risk of poor health.

We need to consider what more is needed to:

- **Give people information and tools** to allow them to make the right choices for themselves and their families.
- **Give service users a clear voice** in the design and organisation of services.
- **Promote the use of community facilities** like accessible gyms, classes, peer support or activity groups which help people to stay well.
- **Give people more control** over tackling their personal health challenges, including long term conditions, enabling them as far as possible to retain independence.
- **Ensure good communication** about medicines and treatments.
For those with acute medical needs, hospital is the safest place. Advances in medicine mean lives can be saved and extended today in ways that were not possible a generation ago.

However, despite Scotland’s globally-recognised success as one of the safest healthcare systems in the world, no one should stay in hospital longer than is necessary.

So we want to ensure more care is delivered at home or in homely settings with:

- More community-based treatment options and care packages to enable people to leave hospital quickly once they are well enough.
- More care homes able to support people with a wider range of physical and mental frailty and needs.
- More care provided by the third sector supporting people at home.
- Increase availability of “step down” care or support at home to enable people to leave hospital quickly once they are well enough.

Some health needs require very specialist treatment. There are benefits for those who need specialist provision to have that provided in centres of excellence by experts in that field.

The Golden Jubilee Hospital’s Cardiac services and the Scottish Liver Transplantation Unit (SLTU) are existing examples of that approach but – always driven by quality and improved patient outcomes – we need to examine opportunities to go further including:

- Making more use of technology to allow people to access specialist diagnosis, monitoring and support from their own homes without the need to travel.
- A national strategy creating regional or national centres of excellence for more specialist treatments, with shorter periods of stay.
To help get the conversation started, we have developed three broad questions:

What support do we need in Scotland to live healthier lives?

What areas of health and social care matter most to you?

Thinking about the future of health and social care services, where should our focus be?

Why not share your views at home, with your friends or at work. Or you can join in the discussions online at: www.healthier.scot

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Or write to us via email at: healthier@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Or post a letter to us: ‘Creating a healthier Scotland. What matters to you?’, The Scottish Government, St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG.

We are committed to ensuring as many people as possible can take part in this conversation. If you have ideas on how we can make the process more accessible for you, such as producing materials in a different format or language, please get in touch via one of the channels above.