

Association of British Paediatric Nurses' background paper on the National Health Service Consultation in relation to children's care

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to inform Association of British Paediatric Nurses (ABPN) members of the key issues from the Consultation relating to children's¹ care

Background

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care launched the [NHS Consultation](#) on 21 October 2024 inviting patients and NHS staff to take part in a "national conversation" to shape the Government's 10-year plan for the NHS in England. Individuals and organisations are invited to respond to the consultation. The consultation is part of a programme of engagement to develop the 10 Year Health Plan which is anticipated in the Spring of 2025.

The Consultation focuses on 3 key aspects (shifts):

- Shift 1: moving more care from hospitals to communities
- Shift 2: making better use of technology in health and care
- Shift 3: focussing on preventing sickness, not just treating it

The Consultation builds on the findings of the [Independent Investigation of the National Health Service in England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) which was published on 12 September 2024. There are a considerable number of direct references to children and young people's health throughout the Independent Review more details can be found in the ABPN [background briefing paper](#) and [position statement](#).

There are five questions for Organisations to answer in the consultation.

1. What do you want to see included in the 10-Year Health Plan and why?
2. What are the biggest challenges and enablers to move more care from hospitals to communities?
3. What are the biggest challenges and enablers to making better use of technology in health and care?
4. What does your organisation see as the biggest challenges and enablers to spotting illnesses earlier and tackling the causes of ill health?
5. Share specific ideas for change. Please include how you would prioritise these and what timeframe you would expect to see this delivered in, for example:

¹ In this paper the term 'child' is used to refer to neonates, infants, children, young people and young adults up to the 25 years of age

- Quick to do, that is in the next year or so
- In the middle, that is in the next 2 to 5 years
- Long term change, that will take more than 5 years

Responses should be submitted by 2 December 2024.

Individuals working in the NHS can also respond to the consultation. Questions are:

- 3 things that are great about your job
- 3 things that are most challenging about your job
- Which challenges that you experience working in the health and care system do you think are most important for the plan to address?

There are also opportunities for everyone to contribute ideas to improve the NHS.

An overview of the key issues of the Consultation in relation to the health and well-being of children and young people.

There are no specific references to children and young people within the Consultation but all three shifts have relevance to the care of children and young people. The Consultation specifically asks for case studies and references to what is working now, this provides a real opportunity to talk about the reality of care and the reality of children's lives.

Shift 1 focuses on moving more care from hospitals to communities. This includes delivering more tests, scans, treatments and therapies nearer to where people live. For children we know that this means better access to services locally, especially equity in accessing community children's nurses and recognising that health care support in communities is also needed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year.

There is a recognition of the importance of people leading healthier and more independent lives, reducing the likelihood of serious illness and long hospital stays. More health services would be provided at places like GP clinics, pharmacies, local health centres, and in people's homes.

For children's care this means access to expertise and an investment in the education and training of professionals, it may involve specific adaptations to facilities. It also provides an opportunity to deliver services within other facilities in neighbourhoods e.g. schools, youth centres, children's hospices.

Shift 2: Moving from Analogue to Digital. Improving how we use technology across health and care could have a big impact on our future health and care services. Examples might include better and interconnected computer systems; video appointments; remote patient monitoring and virtual wards.

Shift 3: Moving from Sickness to Prevention. Spotting illness earlier and tackling the causes of ill health could help people stay healthy and independent for longer, and take pressure off health and care services. The UK once had an enviable public health nursing service provided by health visiting and school nursing, but decades of disinvestment has undermined the service. There is potential to rebuild and modernise services that have proven success in reducing infant mortality rates, encouraging health lifestyles and tackling infectious diseases.

The consultation is inviting everyone to share their ideas on what needs to change across the health and care system. These could be:

- Ideas about how the NHS could change to deliver high quality care more effectively.
- Ideas about how other parts of the health and care system and other organisations in society could change to promote better health and/or improve the way health and care services work together.
- Ideas about how individuals and communities could do things differently in the future to improve people's health.

The government have indicated that there will be a similar consultation on social care in the future

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