

# Patients First

## A Vision and Plan of Action for Future Healthcare in the Saltash area

**Background** Below is the vision and outline plan developed by a collaborative Action Group of patients, community representatives, health professionals and NHS leaders. The Group was formed in belated response to (1) the disinvestment in local services in 2016 through the closure of beds and minor injuries services at St Barnabas Hospital and, more recently, (2) the negative impact of national pressures in the NHS on local services. There is massive frustration in the town that nothing has ever been actioned by the NHS following extensive consultations about the hospital's future. Saltash Town Council, in its Strategic Plan 2024-27, is including support for the Action Group in its goal of improving local NHS provision.

**Mission** The Group exists to ensure health and wellbeing services are fit for purpose for residents of all ages in a town whose population is growing. It also provides a regular forum to share good practice between services, identify need, improve collaboration and ensure that the patient voice is central to all decision making.

**Action** We are agreed that the neglect of healthcare development in this town (compared to other towns in this part of Cornwall, which have had considerable investments over recent years) will have to be reversed. Some improvements are beginning to happen now, others will come soon, and some will necessarily take time. The overall plan is outlined here, but the headline messages for NHS Providers are:

- **MAKE ACCESS EASIER FOR PATIENTS**
- **BRING BACK LOCAL SPECIALIST PROVISION**
- **COORDINATE EVERYTHING BETTER**

The future role of existing buildings, and options for building new ones, to create a 21st century pattern of provision, are inevitably the most ambitious elements of the vision at this stage. Finding sites and building up a financial package are essential steps that will need collective determination which we want to see through. We will be on the look-out for any opportunity to move forward.

***“It is a key principle of our integrated working to listen to the voices of the communities we serve and work with them to co-design services”***

***Kate Shields, Chief Executive, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board, in a letter to the Mayor of Saltash, July 2023***

Benefits to Patients	Actions and timescales
<p data-bbox="204 286 689 322"><b>Make access easier for patients</b></p> <p data-bbox="204 528 842 851">This will come via <b>personal advice from Practices</b> at the point of contact, or by using IT or apps. It will give access not only to GP or nursing appointments, but also direct to wider community services eg physio, clinical pharmacy, mental health, social &amp; community support. This should be a positive experience for all patients, including children.</p> <p data-bbox="204 1115 842 1478"><b>NHS dental services</b> are now totally lacking in the town, which is of great concern to patients and families. This is also a problem to be found in most Cornish towns, and is based on national policy issues which are not being resolved. However, one consequence is a large underspend in the NHS budget in Cornwall - and we are interested in the initiative taken recently in Lostwithiel to access and redeploy this.</p>	<p data-bbox="863 286 1481 609">(1) Changes are already being introduced by Saltash Health Centre and Port View Surgery with additional back-up from East Cornwall Primary Care Network. Progress will be dependent on recruitment, team building, patient engagement, etc. It will need a continuous programme of promotion and explanation in 2023 to win over the hearts and minds of patients.</p> <p data-bbox="863 685 1503 1048">(2) This new style of service would be enhanced by more modern premises, ideally a single Health and Wellbeing Centre for the town on the Plougastel Drive campus. This is an ideal location for patients - and where there are current opportunities for project partnerships. This would be a major project over a number of years, but we are aiming to create an initial vision by end of March 2024.</p> <p data-bbox="863 1344 1471 1451">(3) We will explore options in the hope of taking any opportunity for improved dental provision.</p>

**Bring back local specialist provision**

**Specialist provision** includes wound dressings & minor injuries provision which are now not easy to access here, wider availability of consultant clinics which are under-used currently, and provision of more diagnostics, eg scans and radiology, which are justifiable in a town of the size of Saltash. The approach needs to include provision for children, and for people of all ages with mental health concerns.

**NHS provision of short-term care beds** in the town to facilitate rehabilitation or prevent acute hospital admissions is a vital ingredient of the pattern of service we are seeking to develop. We are agreed that St Barnabas Hospital cannot be adapted for short-term care beds, but we ask whether any local NHS or public sector owned premises could be used for this purpose since beds are needed now. Local patients and their families are currently ill-served by lack of local provision.

(4) Cornwall Partnership Trust (CPT) has undertaken to promote to the public the services available now at St Barnabas Hospital - which are not widely known and understood - and to seek to expand their range.

(5) There is a need for a new type of provision for hands-on services for dressings and minor injuries etc. The idea would be to shift suitable provision from Derriford Hospital and the Cumberland Centre back to where it is actually needed. This may be served by a partnership between CPT and the Practices to be commissioned by Integrated Care Board (ICB)

(6) ICB to be encouraged to plan to commission in 2024/25 new provision of diagnostics in the town for local patients

(7) The provision of local beds would be ideally met by the incorporation of a unit into the plan for the Plougastel Drive campus. Failing that, a new unit, possibly in the Treledan development, or by the permanent adaptation of existing NHS premises, would be needed.

Decisions on how to proceed have been put off for too long, so we will put together with partners an outline vision by the end of 2023. We need such clarity of purpose, or else stakeholders will never be in a position to seize opportunities as they emerge.

**Coordinate everything better**

This is vital to **prevent patients falling between the gaps in services** on the journey between GP, hospital, and community care, etc.

This is particularly important for patients on discharge from hospital or needing acute care at home or rehabilitation, and those with chronic conditions and disabilities, including carer support. Regular “huddles” of community staff, supported by the Integrated Transfer of Care (ITOC) service, are already taking place to manage patient journeys better, and being developed further by CPT and the 2 GP Practices.

(8) Integrated locality team working -primary, community, mental health and social care- to be fully established by the end of March 2024