

# **Government Consultation on developing a 10 Year Plan for the future of the NHS.**

## **Change NHS: help build a health service fit for the future**

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### **Submission of an organisational response.**

#### **Institute of Health Promotion and Education**

The Institute of Health Promotion (IHPE) is a registered charity. [www.ihpe.org.uk](http://www.ihpe.org.uk)

Its Purpose is: -

To advance Health Promotion and Education and its contribution to the public health and inequalities agenda.

Vision: - That the public health will be protected and improved, and positive well-being will be promoted.

Inequalities in health between individuals, groups, and communities will be significantly reduced, and coordinated system-wide action to promote health will be in place.

The Institute is the only organisation dedicated entirely to health promotion and education in the UK. Its work is underpinned by the principles of health promotion set out in the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (Thompson, Watson, and Tilford 2018; World Health Organisation 1986)

### **Q1 What does your organisation want to see included in the 10-Year Plan and why?**

#### **Shift 3. A move from sickness to Prevention.**

### **Q2. What does your organisation see as the biggest challenges and enablers to move more care from hospitals to communities?**

#### **Enablers**

##### **Hospitals as a setting to promote health**

Currently hospitals are mainly focused on providing services for patients that are sick, but they could have a pivotal role in promoting health and tackling inequalities.

References: 1) Matheson A. et al. Lowering hospital walls to achieve health equality. *BMJ* 2018;362: k597 2) World Health Organisation Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion. Copenhagen: World Health Organisation, 1986. 3) Watson, M. Going for gold: the health promoting general practice. *Quality in Primary Care*. 2008; 16:177-185.

The World Health Organisation Ottawa Charter proposed a positive empowering view of health and was influential in guiding the development of the settings approach including hospitals. This moved interventions upstream away from merely focusing on individuals and towards organisations, systems and the environment that can be used to prevent ill health and promote health.

## Primary Care and Community Settings

A growing body of research indicates that many general practitioners are experiencing a high stress level, and this is contributing to low morale, poor mental wellbeing, exhaustion and burnout. Harmful not only to doctors but to the quality of care for patients.

The health of doctors needs to be a priority now. The aim should be to create workplaces that support doctors by promoting their health.

This would support staff retention, quality of care and patient health and satisfaction.

Greater emphasis is needed on promoting population health and reducing inequalities.

More resources are required to achieve this including public health funding to support work in the primary care setting.

References: 1) Watson M C, Owen P, General Practice on the brink. BMJ 2021

A focus on more prevention as well as treatment services in the community and strengthening the role of health promotion by primary care and community-based staff including most crucially health visitors and school nurses.

School nurses are ideally placed to provide continuity of healthcare and development support, targeting early prevention and seamless care in early years as part of public health nursing interventions and support for 0-19year olds and their families.

Promoting and protecting children's mental health is a central role for school nurses, impacting significantly on overall health and educational attainment.

IHPE strongly recommends that there should be a school nurse for every secondary school and cluster of primary schools. This is a priority to reverse the downward trend in child health in the UK.

(School Nurses although NHS staff are currently funded through the Public Health Grant given to Local Authorities)

Reference: Watson M C, Neil K E, and Tilford S. (2024) IHPE Position Statement: School Nursing. ( )

Watson M C, Neil K E and Tilford S (2024) IHPE Position Statement: School Nursing. Altrincham: Institute of Health Promotion and Education.

## Q4. What does your organisation see as the biggest challenges and enablers to spotting illness earlier and tackling the causes of ill health?

### Enablers

Opportunities for the development of preventative services and enormous potential for Allied Health Professional to develop their health promotion and public health role to support individuals, groups and community organisations in promoting health and prevent ill health.

Public health departments in local authorities could play far bigger roles and encourage many key professionals to be involved in health promotion. But they need far greater funding.

School nurses crucial roles include health promotion, health protection, early help, brief intervention and referral to other agencies, as well as supporting children and families. The important public health topics covered include: mental health, child protection, obesity/being

underweight, management of long term conditions, physical activity, safeguarding, alcohol and other drugs. Two examples are briefly mentioned below.

### **Ideas for change**

Ideas about how other parts of the health care system and other organisations in society could change to promote better health and/or improve the way health and care services work together.

The Settings Based Approach to health promotion includes Healthy Cities, health promoting schools, health promoting workplaces, hospitals and prisons. Health can be promoted within and across each setting but a co-ordinated systemwide action to promote health is required at national and local level.

Ideas about how individuals and communities could do things differently in the future to improve people's health

### **Community Development**

Health promotion/public health funding and support for Individuals and communities can be developed using community development approaches to bring people together to act and empower them to access health and wellbeing services and commission voluntary agencies and charities to promote the physical and mental health of groups locally and also support those with specific health conditions to improve their prognosis.

### **Q5. Share specific policy ideas for change. Include how you would prioritise these and what timeframe you would expect to see this delivered in. for example:**

The Institute has published **A positive manifesto for health**, setting out a number of recommendations for prioritising action to improve health and reduce inequalities. These recommendations are:- Create politically independent national organisations to drive forwards improvements in health, Implement a cross-sector approach to public health, Support the creation of Health Promoting Settings, Increase the use of positive health indicators, Reduce inequalities, Prioritise the health of children, Increase the focus of positive mental health, Provide conditions for improved physical health, Help people to increase control over, and to improve, their health, Advocate on important but under highlighted and poorly resourced issues.

Reference: International Journal of Health Promotion and Education 2024, Vol62, No3.193-194. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14635240.2024.2360312>

### **Quick to do, that is in the next year or so**

Far more resources into primary care and public health including ring fencing the Public Health Grant to include the funding of more school nurses

Create positive visions for health rather than having a focus just on sickness/ill health.

Establish national schemes for health promoting settings. Separate ones for Health Promoting Schools, Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Promoting Workplaces.

### **In the middle, that is in the next 2 to 5 years**

Bringing about the shift from sickness to prevention.

Orientate hospitals and community services towards prevention and health promotion.

Legislative changes to improve health eg. reducing fast food advertising, further reductions in vaping.

Employ far more school nurses, health visitors and health promotion specialists. However, they will take time to be trained.

Have award ceremonies for health promoting organisations.

### **Long term change, that will take more than 5 years**

Bringing about changes including action to improve the broader determinants of health including improved housing, environment, educational standards and employment opportunities.

Health promoting settings are seen as the normal.

e.g. Health Promoting Hospitals look after the health of patients, visitors and staff. Healthy options on the food menu. Opportunities for physical activity. Positive mental health promoted.