

Health and Social Care Secretary takes reform agenda on the road

- Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid to tour England this week
- From Somerset to Stockton-on-Tees, visits will focus on COVID-19 recovery, NHS and social care reform, tackling disparities and levelling up the health of the nation
- He will visit a range of health and care settings to hear from staff and patients to inform future policy

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid will be on the 'Road to Recovery' this week on a tour spanning the country where he will visit hospitals, care homes, cancer centres and cutting edge research facilities to engage those most integral to his ambitious reform and recovery agenda.

Kicking off on Monday 14 February, his first stop will be the East of England. His tour will take him to the North West and West Midlands, the North East, South West and South East and London.

Along the way, he will visit care homes, community diagnostic centres, vaccination centres and GP surgeries. He'll meet with urgent community response teams and visit a number of hospital sites to see and hear first-hand the life-saving treatments being delivered and the cutting-edge technology within the NHS.

The tour is an opportunity for the Health and Social Care Secretary to hear from the dedicated health and care staff across the country that have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic. As the country learns to live with COVID-19, it is a chance to discuss the government's plans for a health and care service that not only meets the needs of people today, but also future needs. Each day he will host Q&A sessions with members of the public to listen to and better understand their experiences of the NHS, public health, and social care services.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

As we learn to live with COVID, my mission is clear. We must tackle the backlog of people waiting for treatment, bring NHS and social care services closer together and deal with the stark inequalities and level up the health of the nation.

Nurses, doctors, GPs, vaccinators, porters and so many others have put everything on the line to care for patients and families throughout this pandemic, and that's why I wanted to thank them personally.

This week I want to hear directly from staff, patients, residents and local people about their experiences of the health and care systems and discuss my plans for NHS and social care recovery and

reform.

Building on the phenomenal work of the NHS in the vaccine rollout, which has been crucial in allowing the UK to open up and begin to learn to live with COVID-19, last week the NHS and government set out a blueprint to tackle backlogs of operations and long waits for care built up during the pandemic. This involves a massive expansion of tests, checks and treatments.

The COVID Backlog Recovery Plan will help the NHS reduce waiting times, give patients more control over their care, and harness innovative technology to free up staff time so people across the country can get the treatment they need. Data such as age, ethnicity and deprivation will be analysed to understand how they impact access to treatment to identify ways to level up healthcare and tackle disparities.

The government has also published a new Integration White Paper setting out a vision for a more joined-up NHS and adult social care sector to transform services so they not only deliver more personalised care and treatment for patients, they will improve systems and processes to allow staff to focus more on patient care.

Plans to enable people across the country to live longer, healthier lives are moving forward thanks to two significant independent reviews to tackle health disparities which the government recently announced.

A review into potential ethnic bias in the design and use of medical devices will be led by Professor Dame Margaret Whitehead, professor of public health at the University of Liverpool. Separately, Javed Khan OBE, former CEO of children's charity Barnardo's, will lead an independent review of the government's bold ambition to make England smoke free by 2030.

Both independent reviews will form part of the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities' agenda to tackle inequalities in health and care, which will include the publication of the Health Disparities White Paper in the spring.