

Press release: Local government, NHS 10-year plan and a prevention opportunity

The NHS's upcoming 10-year plan will only succeed if it has local government's expertise and a golden thread of preventing poor health running through it, Public Health England's (PHE) Chief Executive Duncan Selbie has told the Local Government Association (LGA) conference this week. As an example of this, he highlighted a new approach to preventing and tackling obesity which is being piloted by PHE.

The new 5-year funding settlement will see the NHS receive increased funding of £20.5 billion in real terms per year by the end of the 5 years compared to today – an average 3.4% per year overall. The Prime Minister has spoken of the need to improve social care and to support prevention and public health in the new NHS plan, a view echoed by Duncan Selbie.

Duncan Selbie said:

The NHS 10-year plan is a huge opportunity, but it will be judged by how it prioritises prevention. We must of course treat illness but even smarter would be to prevent it. With 40% of all poor health being preventable and 60% of 60 year olds experiencing at least one long term condition this has to be a no brainer.

Keeping people well for longer and helping them to stay in their own homes for longer must be the primary objective. Local government has huge expertise and know how to bring to this.

Mr Selbie was speaking at a meeting on enabling healthy communities, which considered ill health's effects on the economy and the workforce. The economic case for prevention is well established; illness among working age people costs the UK economy £100 billion a year and about 330,000 people every year become unemployed because of health-related issues.

The burden preventable illness puts on public services is also clear. Obesity-related ill health costs the NHS around £6 billion per year, while the impact of obesity on local authority social care budgets is estimated at £350 million per year.

PHE is piloting a whole systems approach to obesity programme, which supports local authorities in tackling obesity through joined-up local action including all departments within the local authority, NHS Trusts, local businesses and voluntary and community organisations. Developed in partnership with the LGA and Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH), it is rooted in the principle that no single individual, group or organisation can tackle obesity alone and that everyone has a part to play.

Leeds Beckett University is supporting 11 pilot local authorities to co-develop resources that will be available for all local authorities, in spring 2019.

On tackling obesity, Duncan Selbie said:

Reversing this epidemic is possible, provided everyone pulls together. No other country in the world is tackling this in such a comprehensive way.

Background

PHE will invite expressions of interest from local authorities to test and provide feedback on the draft guide. This has been co-developed by local authorities, for local authorities, so their input will be invaluable in shaping this innovative piece of work. Local authorities will be sent the draft guide in September for feedback, and then the whole systems approach will be peer reviewed by systems experts before it is made available nationally in spring 2019.

The LGA published a briefing for elected members on the [whole systems approach to obesity](#) in December 2017.

References:

The cost of obesity related ill-health to the NHS:

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21562029 (The direct cost to the NHS in 2006 to 2007 of people being overweight and obese was £5.1 billion. These costs have been updated to £6.1 billion to take into account inflation.)

The impact of obesity on local authority social care budgets:

www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/15.6%20obesity-05.pdf (Unpublished analysis of Health Survey for England combined data 2011 and 2012. Obesity Knowledge and Intelligence. PHE 2014. Cost of extra formal hours of help for severely obese compared to healthy weight people.)