Royal Devon University Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Latest news for our members and stakeholders

August 2025

This newsletter aims to keep you, our members and stakeholders, updated with the latest news from across the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

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Top stories

The new 10 Year Plan for the NHS

On Thursday 3 July, the NHS and Department of Health and Social Care published their 10 Year Plan for the NHS. We'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who spoke to us and our partners to help develop this plan – our staff, volunteers, patients, carers and the public. Nationally, more than a quarter of a million people shared their feedback.

As expected, the plan is focused around three 'big shifts': from hospital to community, from sickness to prevention, and from analogue to digital. As well as setting out longer term ambitions, the plan also addresses what we need to focus on over the next three years to speed up our recovery and transformation across the NHS.

The 10 Year Plan will have big changes for how we work in future. We are reviewing it in more detail and what it means for how we deliver care at the Royal Devon. We will want to hear from our staff, patients, governors, members, and communities about how this might impact them and what they think we should be doing differently to meet the national ambitions for the NHS.

But for now, we know that we are already taking strong steps forward across the three ambitions of the plan.

- **Hospital to community:** As well as our skilled community teams providing more care to patients in their own homes, we are investing in our community sites to bring diagnostics and treatments closer to local communities. Whether that's through our new Endoscopy Unit at Tiverton, our Eye Centres at South Molton and the Nightingale Hospital, or our Community Diagnostic Centres at the Nightingale and planned for Bideford, we are delivering more care away from the main hospital sites.

  Our virtual wards (Acute Hospital at Home) are also going from strength to strength, with great feedback from patients who are receiving hospital-level care, monitoring and treatment from the comfort of their own home.

- **Sickness to prevention:** We're a specialist centre for research and host the Peninsula Clinical Genetics service, which diagnoses genetic conditions and helps people to lower their risks of developing diseases.

  We are also working with partners across Devon to deliver our Health Inequalities Strategy, and our teams support lots of prevention work, such as the recent lung cancer screening pilot in North Devon.

- **Analogue to digital:** An area of strength for us, we are leading the way with the rollout of our electronic patient record Devon-wide. We are already seeing huge benefits for Royal Devon staff and patients, from more joined up working, to giving patients quicker access to test results.

We are trialling the use of artificial intelligence (AI) across a number of specialties to support things like note taking during outpatient appointments, which can help our clinicians spend more time focusing on patients and less time on writing up notes.

The full 10 Year Plan can be found on the Government website here and a video is here.

We look forward to updating you soon about our plans and working with you to ensure we deliver the best care to our communities across Devon.

Dame Shan Morgan, Chair
Sam Higginson, CEO

First UK adult receives pioneering diabetes treatment at the Royal Devon

Devon-based dentist and mum of two, Hannah Robinson, is the first adult in the UK to receive a new type 1 diabetes treatment that could extend the time before she needs to take regular insulin injections by up to three years.

Experts at the Royal Devon and the University of Exeter are leading world-class research to spot individuals at high risk of developing type 1 diabetes, meaning they can be monitored and potentially offered the drug if eligible, transforming the way type 1 diabetes is managed.

This ground-breaking story made national and regional news in July and we're really proud of our teams for their hard work.

Read more on our website.

Cutting-edge technology aims to reduce waiting times for patients

We are piloting technology that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to help with administrative tasks, so that clinicians can devote more time to their patients.

Ambient voice technology turns the words spoken in a consultation between patient and clinician into medical notes and summarises the consultation in real time.

This will reduce the amount of time clinicians spend writing notes, so that they can see an extra patient each day. This would equate to around 15,000 additional appointments across Devon each year, helping to reduce waiting times for patients.

Read more here.

Last chance to join our Council of Governors

We need eight people to bring the voices of their communities to our Trust by nominating themselves to be a public governor.

Our Council of Governors includes people from across Devon. As a governor, you can play a vital role in the work of your local NHS.

You can find out more and submit your application on the nomination portal by 5pm on **Tuesday 5 August 2025**.

Other news

Local MP Steve Race visits Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital

We were delighted to welcome Steve Race, MP for Exeter, to the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (Wonford) on Thursday 24 July.

Steve visited our emergency department and learned about how the recent redevelopment of the unit and new children's area has transformed care for the 100,000 patients who visit us each year. He also learned about our Acute Hospital at Home, and how it's helping patients across the Trust to recover at home with the right support and monitoring.

Steve told us he had been impressed by the great teams he had seen all over the hospital. [Read more here.]

Royal Devon recognised for pioneering digital healthcare

Two of our teams were finalists at the prestigious HSJ Digital Awards for their innovative use of digital technology to improve patient care.

The Ophthalmology department were recognised for a new way of diagnosing glaucoma that has reduced the average waiting time from nine months to just five weeks for a first appointment.

The Acute Hospital at Home (AHAH) team were finalists for their pioneering use of wearable devices that enables patients to have round-the-clock clinical monitoring and support from the comfort of their own homes in rural Devon.

Read more here.

Cancer care at the Royal Devon rated above national average by patients

The 2024 National Cancer Patient Survey results were released in July and we scored well against the national average.

We had 1636 survey responses, a 60% response rate, which is well above the national average for participation. Nationally, the average rating of cancer care sits at 8.9 out of 10. We achieved a rating of 9.1, up from 9.0 in 2023.

[Read more here.](#)

New interpretation and translation services provider from 4 August

From Monday 4 August, we will have a new interpretation and translation services provider called AbsolutE. This is part of our ongoing efforts to improve availability, accessibility and flexibility of services. The new contract will support both our staff and patients with quicker access to an interpreter when needed.

There will be a change in how some patients receive services, as we make the move to digital first. Most interpretation will happen over video or on the phone. We will continue to offer face-to-face support where necessary to ensure patient needs are fully met.

More information will be available on our website soon, and we are in direct communication with those patients who are most impacted by the change.

If you have any questions about the new service, you can share your thoughts with the [Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS)](#) team.

Shaping sexual health services to meet local needs

Working in conjunction with sexual health charity [The Eddystone Trust](#), Devon Sexual Health, which is provided by the Royal Devon, is developing a dedicated outreach programme to improve awareness and access to sexual health and contraception care for vulnerable groups in our local communities.

Sue Smith, Head of Devon Sexual Health, said: “By improving awareness and access to sexual health care, we will be helping to empower, enable and equip individuals with the tools to make informed choices regarding their sexual health.”

Read the full story on our website.

For more information on sexual health services available in Devon and Torbay, visit devonsexualhealth.nhs.uk

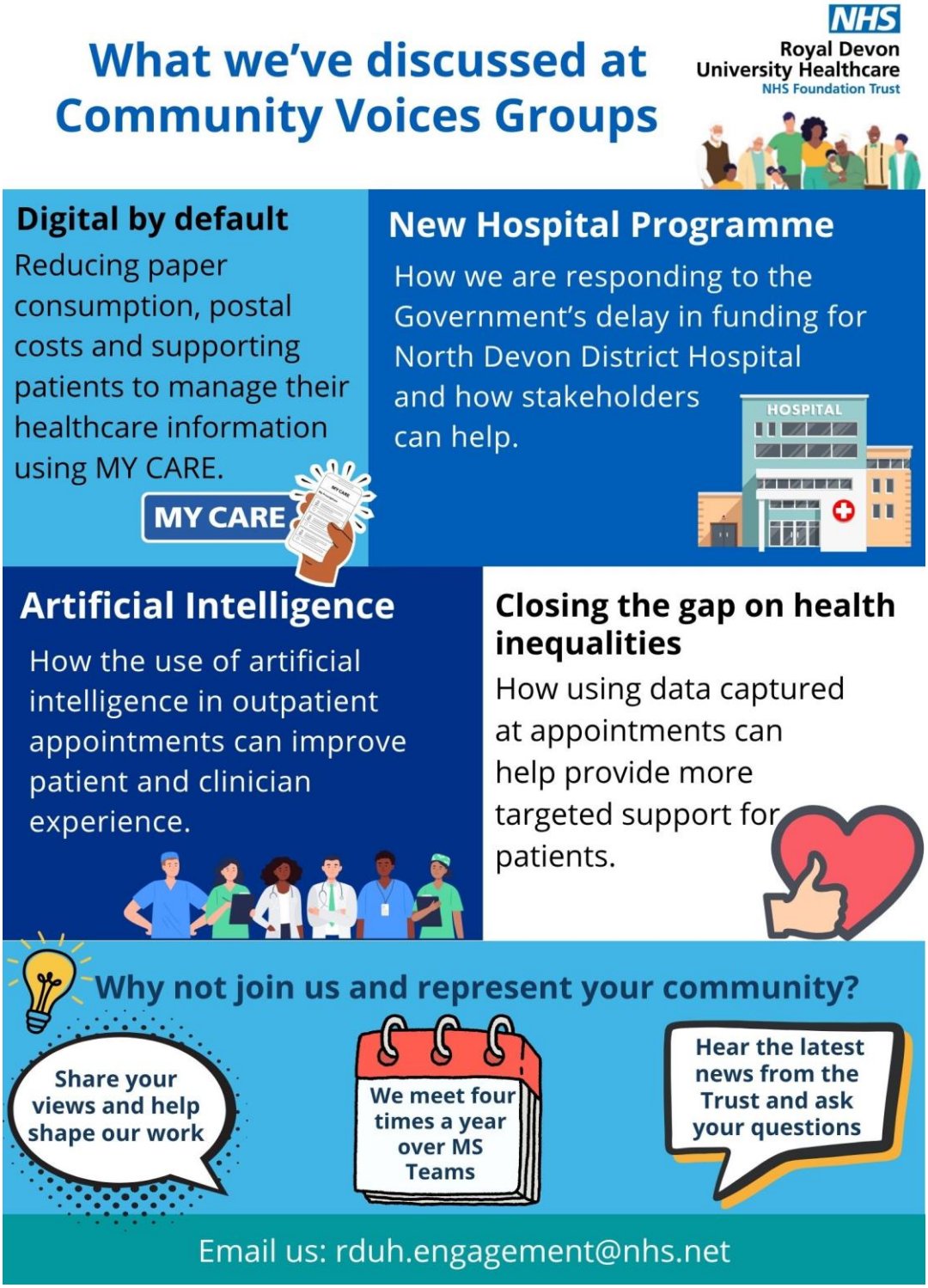
Devon Sexual Health
Contraception, Sexual Health & HIV service

Join our Community Voices Groups and make a difference for your community

Are you part of a community group? Are you interested in what’s happening at Royal Devon hospitals and in our health care services across North, East and Mid Devon?

We have two Community Voices Groups – one focused on the RD&E and services around Exeter and Eastern Devon, and one focused on NDDH and services around Northern Devon. Our groups are a great way for you to make a difference for your community and get more involved in our work. We’re particularly keen to hear from those who represent broader community groups and networks.

Here are some of the things we’ve talked about together this year.



Find out more on our Community Voices Group page, including how to join us.

Royal Devon Hospitals Charity news

Find out how you can support the Royal Devon Hospitals Charity here.

Celebrating 5 years of the Fern Centre

The Fern Centre is celebrating its fifth anniversary this month. The cancer wellbeing centre at North Devon District Hospital opened its doors on 28 July 2020 following a £1.5m fundraising appeal by Royal Devon Hospitals Charity (then known as Over and Above).

During the last five years, this wonderful resource has provided support for thousands of local cancer patients and their families, offering a whole range of free counselling, complementary therapies, information and wellbeing support.

Read more here.

Exeter College students' 'super' effort for theatre appeal

Thanks to students from Exeter College for giving our Super Theatre Appeal another huge boost with a £3,700 fundraising cheque. The Healthcare, Childcare and Public Services Faculty students have been busy taking part in sponsored walks and running raffles, ice cream and cake stalls, and even a charity shop!

Once open, this 'super theatre' will revolutionise surgery for thousands of patients right across East, North and Mid-Devon.

Find out more about the Super Theatre Appeal and how you can help here.

News in brief

MIU and newly-refurbished X-ray service reopen at Honiton Hospital

These services have now returned to Honiton Hospital following an extensive refurbishment project and an upgrade to the latest radiology equipment.

Update from NHS Devon about minor injuries services in Ilfracombe

NHS Devon has extended the weekend minor injury service at the Tyrrell Hospital, Ilfracombe until September 2025 to cover the summer holiday period.

£2.4 million to expand research to spot early cancer warning signs

A pilot project we are supporting to help GPs spot early warning signs of cancer from routine blood tests has received £2.4 million of funding.

Award for cytology team

Our Diagnostic Cytology team have received a Royal College of Pathologists (RCPath) Achievement Award.

Have your say on proposed changes to the NHS dental contract

The Government has opened a consultation on changes to the NHS dental contract – you can submit your feedback on the proposals. The consultation will close on 19 August 2025.

Help shape Devon's health and social care workforce of the future

Devon and Somerset Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and Devon Chamber is calling on health and social care organisations across Devon to complete a short online survey to help gain a better understanding of the skills and training required regionally.

Have you heard about our shuttle bus for the Nightingale Hospital?

The Nightingale Hospital has a small drop off area but no onsite parking, so if you have an appointment Monday – Friday (6.30am – 8pm), be sure to make use of our free shuttle bus for a hassle-free visit. Find out more about getting to the Nightingale on the website.

Follow the Trust on social media

Follow our Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and LinkedIn pages for all our latest updates as they happen!

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One Devon

NHS and CARE working with communities and local organisations to improve people's lives