

WORKING TOGETHER WITH AMBULANCE SERVICES TO IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING

LAUNCH of CONSENSUS STATEMENT – 7th February 2017

The Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) is pleased to announce the launch of a joint consensus statement describing the intent of all NHS ambulance trusts, together with partner agencies, to increase our collaboration to support improved health and wellbeing among the most vulnerable people in society.

“All of these organisations have come together”, says Dr Anthony Marsh, Chair of AACE, “in recognition of the responsibilities we jointly hold in respect of population health and the opportunities open to us to both promote good health and to prevent ill health. We are committed to contributing to these aims through proactive and pre-emptive means, as much as we are responsive to those needing urgent and emergency care and treatment. We look forward to working with our voluntary organisations in particular, to increase the impact we can have by engaging in new public health initiatives collaboratively”.

NHS England's Medical Director, Professor Sir Bruce Keogh said: *“The vision for the Ambulance Service: ‘2020 and beyond’ includes an increasing role in prevention and health promotion. This consensus statement reflects the evolving role of the Ambulance Service as a mobile healthcare provider using the richness of expertise residing in its workforce.*

Providing a clear statement on the joint national approach, highlighting our shared purpose and commitment to Making Every Contact Count and setting out the scale of the opportunity available, will help both realise the ambulance vision ‘2020 and beyond’ and support the increased focus on integration and prevention as set out in the NHS Five Year Forward View. It will help ensure that outcomes for patients are improved and resources across the healthcare system are utilised more effectively. It also recognises the need to broaden and deepen the involvement of the voluntary sector in developing solutions.

We are delighted to be a part of this consensus statement translating plans into reality”.



Professor Kevin Fenton, National Director, Health and Wellbeing at Public Health England added, *“Ambulance staff come into contact with the public millions of times each year and could be playing an even bigger role in helping to provide health promotion advice, care and support. These everyday interactions represent opportunities to start important conversations with people struggling with substance misuse or mental illness or those at risk of cardiovascular disease, social isolation or falls. PHE is pleased to be working with ambulance services and the other partners signed up to this consensus statement to really make sure that every contact counts.”*

Building on activities already in place through joint working with our partner blue-light agencies, and initiatives identified within the recently published *Allied Health Professionals Into Action*, NHS ambulance services are seeking to extend the impact we can have on the health of the nation by working in partnership with St John Ambulance, the British Red Cross and Local Government bodies, with the support of NHS England and Public Health England. We are also working with Health Education England, the Royal Society for Public Health and the College of Paramedics to enhance the skill sets in our workforce, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to enable them to provide our patients with appropriate advice and signpost them to services that can support them in improving their health and reducing risks of ill health or injury.

Kiran Kenth, Head of Development at The Royal Society for Public Health said, *“We need to embrace the potential that ambulance services can contribute to the health system and improve the care of patients and individuals within society. We see ambulance services as an integral part of the wider public health workforce, with responsibility for designing and delivering improvements to health and well-being and reducing health inequalities. RSPH are committed to this new collaborative approach at system level and will support education and training, organisational development and share learning to help improve local services to improve public health and wellbeing.”*

In the coming months, all of the organisations who have signed up to this consensus statement, will be sharing examples of good practice already in place across the country and looking to develop new initiatives to address the most pressing risks to health where we believe we can make the biggest improvements for individuals and local health economies.



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A consensus statement developed by NHS England, Public Health England, Health Education England, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, the Royal Society for Public Health, the College of Paramedics, the Local Government Association, St John Ambulance and the British Red Cross.

This consensus statement describes the intent of the above partners to increase their collaboration to support improved health and wellbeing, particularly among the most vulnerable people in society.

The ***Urgent and Emergency Care Review (2013)*** and the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives' vision document ***2020 and Beyond (2015)*** both highlighted the key role the ambulance service has to play in the provision of ill-health prevention and health promotion advice, care and support. Health and care providers across all sectors - together with colleagues in public health, local government, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations - have a shared interest in recognising and further enhancing the ambulance service's role in this work. This consensus statement represents a joined-up, multi-agency approach as part of the national commitment to more integrated care, closer to people's homes. Its emphasis is on the national contribution which supports local initiatives and care pathways to deliver preventive interventions that can support local sustainability and transformation planning.

Demand for health and social care is rising as a result of an increase in the number of people with long term conditions, alongside an ageing population. The ***NHS Five Year Forward View*** highlights the need for an increased focus on integration and prevention, so that resources are used more effectively, outcomes for people are improved and, where possible, demand is reduced over the long term. It also recognises the need to broaden and deepen the involvement of the voluntary sector in developing solutions to these issues.

Alongside long term conditions, including frailty and those at end of life, there are many other common underlying factors which increase demand on health and care services, such as mental health problems, cognitive impairment, smoking, drugs or substance misuse, physical inactivity, poor diet, obesity, cold or poor housing, loneliness and social isolation. By identifying people with these risk factors and taking a whole system approach to interventions which are centred on their needs, NHS ambulance services and their partners can work more closely together to make every contact with these vulnerable people count.

The partners in this consensus statement have agreed to work together to better support people to live longer, healthier lives through a more integrated approach to enhanced public health and prevention. In particular, we aim to engage with the most vulnerable people in our communities, to improve or maintain their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Through their millions of interactions with patients and the public, NHS ambulance services and their partners have committed to identifying people who may benefit from better advice about specific risks to their health. They believe that providing information and signposting people to locally provided services can support the personalised, integrated care they need to live healthier lives. This will add significantly to the improvement of the health of people in England and in turn will help reduce demand on health and social care services over the long term.

NHS ambulance services

There are ten NHS ambulance service trusts in England and in 2015/16 they dealt with 10.68 million 999 calls, a figure that rises year on year. A significant number of these patients are not engaged with other NHS or social care organisations, which represents a unique opportunity for ambulance staff to champion ill-health prevention and public health promotion directly at the point of care. In addition, Patient Transport Services have millions of scheduled patient contacts each year, with many of the patients being well known to the staff who attend them, giving the opportunity to sequentially review each patient's social environment. NHS ambulance services (via the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives) commit to further enhancing their contribution to ill-health prevention and public health promotion.

NHS England, Public Health England and Health Education England

As national bodies these partners have agreed to identify and explore opportunities to promote guidance, share information better, support education and training needs and share learning to help improve local services to improve public health and wellbeing.

The College of Paramedics

The College of Paramedics continues to develop the role of paramedics in public health and prevention through publication and ongoing review of the Paramedic Curriculum Guidance. This means that paramedics have a basic knowledge of public health from the start of their career and an understanding that paramedics are well placed to influence key areas of public health practice, particularly with regard to individual interventions and ***Making Every Contact Count (MECC)***. An increased awareness of public health principles, the wider determinants of health and the importance of multiagency practice will enhance work that is already being done by paramedics throughout the UK.

St John Ambulance and British Red Cross

These partners provide ambulance services in a range of circumstances they will use this significant daily contact with the general public to support public health initiatives and work collaboratively to progress the ***MECC*** agenda wherever possible. They will also look for opportunities from other services which they provide, for example Event First Aid and Independent Living services.

Collectively

The partners commit to work together to use their shared capabilities and resources more effectively to enhance the lives of those with complex needs and the people they work with. Each partner will support and encourage its local networks to do the same within their communities while recognising that there will need to be local flexibility in the way this happens. Clearly promoting staff health and wellbeing is important to delivering improvements in the public's health and wellbeing and therefore this will be included in our collaborative approach.