

# Devon Doctors works in partnership with other healthcare providers to overcome challenges facing the NHS

## Introduction

A not-for-profit organisation, Devon Doctors has been providing urgent out-of-hours care to the county's 1,000,000-plus residents for more than 20 years.

In October 2016 it assumed responsibility for the provision of one of the country's first Integrated Urgent Care Services [IUCS], with conventional out-of-hours care and NHS 111 in Devon coordinated by a Clinical Assessment Service [CAS]. Since April 2018 Devon Doctors has also been providing the IUCS in Somerset.

Looking forward, Devon Doctors is intent on providing a critically acclaimed IUCS in line with the IUCS Specification, the NHS Five-Year Forward View, and the NHS Long-Term Plan. While the IUCS is not yet delivering on all key quality indicators, with investment in staff at all levels, particularly operations and business development, Devon Doctors is confident that this is within sight.

In the meantime, Devon Doctors continues to deliver urgent care befitting of patients' needs, while working in partnership with other healthcare providers to overcome the challenges facing the NHS.

## Background

Devon Doctors was established in 1996 to provide support to a number of GP cooperatives across Devon; out of this, Devon Doctors Ltd was born in 2004 to provide GP out-of-hours care for the county.

Jointly owned by all the GP practices in the county, it has been a social enterprise since 2007, reaffirming the



organisation's commitment to reinvesting any surplus it might make into the service to continue to drive excellence in clinical care.

To this end, the organisation is clinically led and will not deviate from putting patients at the centre of every decision it makes.

The principle components of Devon Doctors Ltd are the IUCS providing urgent out-of-hours care and the Clinical Assessment Service which operates a range of services in the in-hours period.

In addition, Devon Doctors Ltd 100 per cent owns two subsidiary companies; Access Health Care and Access Dental are also social enterprises, committed to reinvesting any surpluses to improve the services they offer to the public.

Access Health Care provides primary care services in hours and specialises in turning around the performance of failing GP practices, as well as providing specialist primary care for complex

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patient groups, including the homeless and those with drug and alcohol problems, while Access Dental provides an out-of-hours service for urgent dental problems across Devon.

## Mission statement

Devon Doctors is committed to Putting Patients First via the provision of exceptional care.

## Where are we now?

Devon Doctors is responsible for the provision of integrated urgent care services in Devon and Somerset, with the NHS 111 element of the latter service being delivered in partnership with a subcontractor.

At the same time, the CAS has expanded to incorporate a multi-professional team including paediatric nurses, pharmacists, paramedics, advanced nurse practitioners and general practitioners can deliver comprehensive clinical care. The capacity for specific groups



of professionals, such as paramedics-on-scene, to have clinical support via a GP in the CAS allows a significantly greater proportion of patients to be managed in their home environment, as opposed to a hospital or care setting, than would otherwise be the case. The CAS is also responsible for initiatives such as a specialist line for care homes to facilitate nurses managing frail elderly patients to obtain clinical support more quickly than they would through the conventional NHS Pathways assessment, a dedicated line for palliative patients, their families and carers, and the direct booking of patients who may, for instance, have inappropriately turned up at an Emergency Department into the IUCS system.

## Our strategic goals 2018-2021

- [1] To deliver an IUCS truly aligned and integrated with NHS 111, thereby facilitating definitive clinical care in as few steps as possible [as outlined in the IUCS Specification, the NHS's Five-Year Forward View and the NHS Long-Term Plan].
- [2] To allow the direct booking of patients into the most appropriate centre to manage their care in and out of hours.
- [3] To develop a clinical and non-clinical workforce that is resilient and well equipped to respond to the unpredictable demands of urgent care.
- [4] To lead and develop new workforce programmes with Health Education England, local acute providers and training organisations such as the South West Deanery.
- [5] To develop and lead on digital technologies that will allow access to a single clinical record and enhance access to clinical care.
- [6] To continue to provide excellent palliative care.
- [7] To work in partnership with CCGs to deliver innovative models of urgent care, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- [8] To work in partnership with



in-hours primary care.

- [9] To reduce avoidable 999 ambulance and ED attendances.
- [10] To develop frailty pathways that allow frail patients seamless access to a clinician with specialist links to acute providers.

## To realise our goals we will:

- [1] Continue to be a clinically led organisation, with strong ethical and moral values, putting patients at the centre of each and every decision we make.
- [2] Invest in staff to ensure that they realise their potential and benefit from a working environment that is focused on providing excellent patient-centred care.
- [3] Ensure that our clinical and non-clinical rotas equip us to provide a first-class service without placing staff under undue pressure.
- [4] Support all staff in their roles and never expect anyone to work beyond the limits of their competency.
- [5] Accurately plan activity using validated data modelling tools.
- [6] Utilise the latest technology to improve the way we deliver services.
- [7] Act in an open and

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transparent manner in all partnership working.

- [8] Adhere to information governance guidelines at all times.
- [9] Follow robust and transparent governance processes to protect patients and staff.
- [10] Deliver clinical services within budgetary constraints.

## Overview

Devon Doctors is committed to providing excellent clinical care for each and every patient who accesses our services, by respecting our core values, while valuing all our staff and developing an honest working relationship with commissioners and fellow providers. We are prepared to challenge conventional practice if we believe it will lead to higher quality and more cost effective care. We will seek to develop services that provide heightened standards of care for vulnerable groups, such as the homeless, the elderly, or those who are affected by alcohol or drug addiction, mindful of the financial constraints facing the NHS.



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