General practice in London

• Health and care services provided by GPs and practice nurses are the cornerstone of the NHS

• High quality general practice provides a holistic approach to our care, from preventing illness and diagnosing problems, to treating diseases and managing long term conditions

• 90% of patient contact with the NHS takes place in general practice

• As well as providing care, GPs help their patients to access the care they need in other settings

• GPs represent a single co-ordinator of care for people from birth through to the end of their life.
General practice in London

• There is an unprecedented strain on GPs London today. As a result, London’s general practice is becoming unsustainable, and we need to make big changes to the way it is organised and run.

• Tweaking at the edges will not be an option – London needs solutions that will sustain primary care for the next 65 years and more.

• NHS England recognises the challenges GPs face and is committed to working closely with them to support them in making positive changes.
NHS England (London Region) has published a ‘case for change’ about London’s primary care. It sets out the challenges facing general practice today and the priorities that doctors and patients have told us are important to address.
Challenges for London’s GPs (1)

- **London’s population is growing** and projected to increase by 1m by 2020 or 13% by 2031.

- **London has stark health inequalities**. Residents in different parts of London experience varying life expectancy rates and/or different health outcomes.

- London has relatively **high numbers of small practices**, making it more challenging to deliver a full range of safe, high quality services nationally.

- There are **challenges facing the workforce**, including a significant shortage of practice nurses and above average age profile of GPs.
Challenges for London’s GPs (2)

• There are major financial constraints on the NHS. Unless we make radical changes to the way services are organised, London will face at least a £4bn funding gap by 2020.

• In one region of London, 30% of practices are operating from substandard premises and this is reflected in other areas of London.

• London has a very transient population. More than 200,000 people move into or leave London each year. This means GP patients lists can be inaccurate, further increasing workload and disrupting the continuity of care.
Challenges for London’s GPs (3)

- More than 100 languages are spoken in London and more than 300,000 people cannot speak English.

- **As the population ages, there is an increasing number of people living with multiple and complex long-term conditions.** Patients with long term conditions account for more than 50% of GP appointments and consume more than 75% of total health and social care spend. The biggest increase in population group will be the over 65s – set to increase by approx 19% by 2020.

- Between 1990-2010 life expectancy in London increased by 5.2 years. But there are wide variations between different boroughs and some stark health inequalities.
What this means for Londoners as a result
What this means for Londoners (1)

- There are big, unexplained variations in the quality of GP services across the city.
- Too many Londoners struggle to see a GP when it is convenient for them and London has lower patient satisfaction scores compared to other parts of England;
- Cancer referrals are lower in London than the rest of England with late diagnosis being a key factor in poorer cancer survival rates. 23 of the lowest 25 boroughs for breast screening coverage are in London.
- Rates of emergency admissions for children with chronic conditions vary across London.
• Londoners report that they are less able to see their preferred GP compared to other parts of the country. For eg. according to the patient satisfaction survey, only 57% of patients in Newham are seeing their GP of choice, compared to 70% in Kensington & Chelsea (national ave 70%) – Ldn average 65%

• On average London’s GP practices achieve just 81% patient satisfaction compared with a national average of 88% satisfaction.

• Londoners struggle to see a GP at times that are convenient for them, including in the evening and at weekends.
Improving access, coordination and proactive care for patients
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- We recognise the challenges, and we want to support GPs to make long-term changes that will enable them to provide more accessible, more proactive and more coordinated care.
- To do this, we will set out a service offer for Londoners in January. GPs will then work towards these standards over the next 5 years leading to a benchmark for the quality of care and services Londoners should expect from their GP practices.
In practice, GPs say this could mean (1):

- 7 day services and better surgery hours for working people
- Seeing patients faster than A&E
- Using technology to improve access, through online appointment bookings, prescriptions and also consultations via teleconferencing systems like Skype or Facetime. This is already been trialled in some practices.
- Offering a wide range of services – from drug and alcohol counselling, to blood tests, to diabetes clinics – so that the majority of a patient’s health needs can be address in primary care.
In practice, GPs say this could mean (2):

• Looking at how to better coordinate services between GPs and the rest of the NHS to ensure consistent and joined up care.

• Segmenting primary care. London has a diverse population and patients have very different needs as a result. Many young, working people just need convenient and quick access to a GP, whereas there are a high number of older people with long-term conditions who need GP-patient continuity and longer appointments. We need to consider how to respond to these different needs, so we should consider whether we segment primary care in London.

• Better facilities and estate in GP practices.
In order to deliver these changes, we need to consider future models of organisation in general practice. For instance:
Federated arrangements
Formal and informal networks or mergers
Next steps
Next steps

• This is the start of a radical transformation, which could change the face of GP services in the capital over the next 5 years.

• In the New Year, NHS England will work with clinicians and patients to create a set of proposals describing the service offer that all practices would like to provide and that all Londoners should have access to. The service offer will focus on three aspects of care: accessible care, proactive care and coordinated care. GPs will then work towards these standards over the next 5 years leading to a benchmark for the quality of care and services Londoners should expect from their GP practices.
What you can do

• Please read the *Transforming Primary Care in London: General Practice - A Call to Action* report and complete the online survey on the London pages of the NHS England website

• Join in the conversation on the myhealthlondon website

• Follow us on Twitter @NHSEnglandLDN and use #nhscalltoaction

• Inform your colleagues, friends and family about *Transforming Primary Care in London: General Practice - A Call to Action*

• Contact the Call to Action team on england.londoncalltoaction@nhs.net if you have any queries or would like to invite a member of the Call to Action team to present at any upcoming meetings.