

Medical Director's Notes

At the end of September, I was part of a small group, led by Ed Garratt the Chief Executive of the Integrated Care Board, who visited Northumbria Care Trust. There is a feeling locally that our hospital-centric model is unsustainable and a community-based alternative is needed hence the trip.

Northumbria is certainly an innovative trust. It has managed community services for some time and these integrate with the hospital. Outpatients and diagnostics happen in community hubs. It has started a social care provider.

The most surprising thing about the visit was their culture. It felt very clinically led and the teams we met had a quiet confidence about what they do and are encouraged to take risks. They have not resolved everything, for example mental health.

My main concern was how general practice fits in? In Northumbria, the Trust already directly run one in ten practices and there is little integration with the remainder. For Suffolk, the key question in my mind is how general practice integrates with our Integrated Neighbourhood Teams? These are the building blocks around which our community and social services are being built and into which our system is investing significant sums.



New Fed objectives

Your Board has set new objectives for the Fed following our strategy review:

1. Support and lead change in Suffolk general practice.
2. Provide a portfolio of 'at scale' services which directly support members, provide system expertise and enable the general practice voice to be heard.
3. Provide excellent patient centred clinical services which allows us to deliver our first two objectives.

What does the Fed's new strategy mean for member practices?

The key change is to create a standalone Member Services division. This will develop a portfolio of initiatives which directly support members' longer-term sustainability. These currently include:

- **Estates CIC** (community interest company) - to enable general practice to own new developments, sign long-term leases and help manage some 'last man standing'/succession issues.
- **Process automation** - we believe this is a major opportunity for practices to free-up admin time. An example, which is already working, is new patient registrations (detailed later in the newsletter). We are starting with low-risk processes, such as filing of negative screening results, before we move onto processes involving clinicians. These obviously would generate significant time savings but are more difficult to automate.
- **Digital** - the team is supporting the General Practice Digital & Automation Group which meets monthly. One of the priorities is to support practices to use existing digital tools more effectively e.g. self-referrals.
- **Increasing self-referral** - particularly focusing on services where practices are required to refer but it is feasible for patients to self-refer.
- **Clinical services** - which directly reduce practice workload. Examples include examining different ways care homes could be managed and delivery of new medications such as Inclsiran.
- **New ways of working** e.g. helping disseminate learning from the new ways general practice is working across Suffolk.

Member Services will also manage some existing services which support members: HR Advice, GP Support Hub and Medical Records (Lloyd George note off-site storage and scanning).

Your Board has committed to investing a significant sum each year in direct Member Services: £200k in 2023/4 rising to £300k in 2024/5. We have appointed Sarah Moody, our HR Manager, to lead the Member Services team and our senior team is dedicating a significant portion of their time. Many of the projects are digital related and these are being delivered by the Fed's Information Management & Technology team.

Automating new patient registrations – dispensing practice module now live

This is the first automation project and has involved working with a company called Healthtech-1. They have now built a module which automates the registration of patients in dispensing practices, for example it checks using a map and postcode if they are eligible for dispensing. Getting up and running is very easy with just thirty minutes of work and the immediate savings in admin time are meaningful. Briefing note via david.pannell@suffolkfed.org.uk.

All patients can now self-refer to Podiatry

Practices no longer need to refer patients; patients can be directed to self-refer via the existing online platform or the recently added telephone option. We will be distributing cards for reception desks. <https://podiatryselfrefer.co.uk/sfed> or telephone 0333 043 3966 option 1.

News in brief

- **Admin support for Suffolk LMC** – the Fed is helping our LMC with their admin including finance and payroll.
- **Ultrasound backlog** – a private firm is helping with a backlog of scans. This is working well, our audits of their work have not identified any issues and the backlog should be cleared by early December. We also monitor patient feedback and this is positive.

GP Support Hub update

- **First5 Events** - West next meet in November and NEE in the New year. [First 5 GP | The GP Support Hub](#)
- **Shapes Toolkit** – 12 month programme supporting all general practice staff's wellbeing and resilience. Monthly webinars and then specific dates for GPs, PMs and ARRS roles with F2F and online sessions. <https://www.shapestoolkit.com/offers/cxnoyoPM/checkout>
- **Later Career Events** – GPs looking to support with the later career stage the next event for this cohort will be in November. [Contact | The GP Support Hub](#)
- **New GP Support Hub website launched** – <https://gpsupporthub.org.uk/>
- **BringBaby** – The next event is November- great for GPs that have had some time out, offers training information and support for returning to work after a period away. [Suffolk GP BringBaby webinar 22nd Nov 2023 Tickets, Wed 22 Nov 2023 at 10:00 | Eventbrite](#)
- **Red Whale GPU Course** – Autumn / Winter content, virtual event is on 18th November offering different course content and resources to access. [OVERVIEW CONSOLE - SDL: GPU - Suffolk GP Federation - 20.05.23 & 18.11.23 \(on24.com\)](#)