

# Statement on role of our Community Hospitals



There are no plans in our updated STP to close any of the county's community hospitals. In fact it is a long standing ambition to see them do more than they currently do. For example there are outpatient treatments for which you may have traditionally had to attend the larger acute sites which we think should be provided more locally in a community hospital. We have already shifted some of this activity, so you can already get complex neuro services, blood transfusions and other IV therapies from a community hospital, and we will be exploring more opportunities like this.

In addition, any reductions in community bed numbers (which include social care beds and community hospital beds) would be predicated on the work we are doing right now to improve those services which support people out of hospital. All local health and care organisations are working together to develop what we are calling 'Local Neighbourhood Teams', which will be made of district nurses, social care staff, GPs, and others who are typically needed to support more vulnerable patients who may have multiple health conditions. These staff will, for the first time, come together to work as one single team and will be tasked with providing more responsive and proactive care to those identified patients in their own homes. This should keep them well at home for longer and if admission to a community bed is required, should reduce their length of stay. This is what patients and the public have consistently told us they want.

If we get this right we would expect over time the demand for community beds to reduce, and if demand comes down we would then look at the numbers of beds to see if reductions are appropriate. Any reductions in community bed numbers would only be possible once we have established the local neighbourhood teams and could clearly see demand for the beds coming down. Our community hospitals will continue to have inpatient wards and beds as we recognise the role they play in supporting people recovering from an acute illness, and equally to get additional support for those times when they can't safely be cared for at home.

We hope this provides some reassurance as to role we see for community hospitals, as well as some clarity and rationale which sits behind any potential future bed capacity changes.