

5th May 2026

via Email

Dear Colleagues

Re: Neighbourhood Health Centres

In mid-April the Government published guidance documents regarding Neighbourhood Health Centres (NHCs) and design and performance specifications. The guidance asks ICBs, working with stakeholders and partners to develop a strategic pipeline of future Neighbourhood Health Centres.

Government has made a commitment to deliver 250 NHCs by 2035, including 120 by 2030. They are a core part of the Government's 10 Year Health Plan. NHCs are intended to become the main place people go for most health needs in their community, shifting care from hospitals into communities. They are designed to support a new neighbourhood health model focused on prevention, proactive care and integrated multidisciplinary working. They bring together GP practices with community health services, mental health support, diagnostics, adult social care and voluntary and community sector services.

The model aims to improve access to general practice, reduce fragmentation between services, shift activity out of acute hospitals, and address health inequalities by prioritising areas with lower healthy life expectancy. While neighbourhood health is not limited to a physical building, suitable estate is described as a critical enabler of system transformation.

There are a number of pre-requisites in the guidance:

- Centres must include on-site general practice and operate at scale (typically serving around 50,000 people). This could be challenging in parts of our geography due to the rurality and dispersed nature of some areas.
- Expected opening hours are at least 12 hours a day, 6 days a week.
- The programme prioritises upgrading and repurposing existing estate; most new builds will be delivered through a public-private partnership (PPP) model.

Across the three ICBs in our Cluster we recognise that there are a number of buildings that could already function as NHCs or could do so with modest investment.

Community hospitals, local authority facilities, One Public Estate sites and primary care buildings all offer opportunities to bring services together and create a more joined-up local offer. Furthermore, other initiatives such as local Get Britain Working plans and associated partnerships can support agreements around shared estates.

We have a pressing deadline to share our initial pipeline of sites with NHS England by the end of this month and so will be working rapidly to achieve that. It is important to note that this submission is our starting point for development and we will iterate our plans as more

detailed work is undertaken. Therefore, I will ask the Director of Commissioning of Place, and your neighbourhood lead to work with you to ensure that we reflect your ambition (recognising this is our first response and likely to change).

As we develop these pipelines we will want to work with you to secure your input into this important work. In particular we would welcome your input into:

- Potential location of neighbourhood health centres and any impact on existing GP practices, community hospitals or high streets.
- Use of public and civic buildings to deliver health services.
- Alignment with local regeneration, housing growth and transport plans.
- How neighbourhood health centres address health inequalities and access in deprived communities.
- Opportunities for NHCs to act as anchor institutions supporting local employment and regeneration.

The development of our proposals will be an iterative process as we will need to develop more detailed business cases for the pipeline schemes once they are given initial approval, but we are keen to receive your input and ideas at this early stage.

Please do reach out to me if you would like to be involved in the shaping of our plans

Yours faithfully



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