

Community organisations and primary care networks: working together for health and wellbeing

October 2019

Key messages:

- Primary care networks (PCNs) are a significant new way of organising local health and care services everywhere
- They will need to work closely with community groups and organisations
- This is a short summary: more information is available on our website.

Since the NHS was established over 70 years ago, people's health and care needs have increased and become more complex, that's why PCNs have been established.

PCNs bring together the health and care services in a local area (usually covering 40,000 to 50,000 people) to deliver more joined-up care.

PCNs are not new organisations, they are simply all the health and care organisations that work with people in their local area coming together.

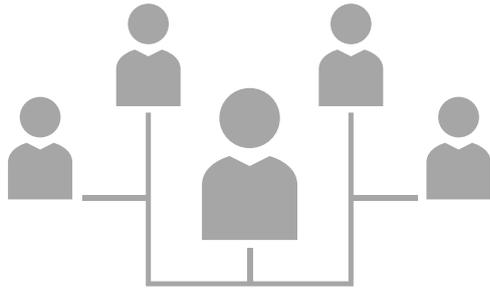
A long-term shift

To continue to provide high-quality care, the NHS needs to change how it works. The NHS Long Term Plan published in January 2019 describes a new way of delivering care to patients - PCNs are the first step in that change.

In the past, some people will have felt that their care has been fragmented as different health and care organisations didn't always work together. PCNs will improve this by ensuring that patients benefit from more joined-up, 'personal' care that is provided closer to where they live.

The networks will also look at a local area's overall health needs; focusing on preventing ill health and making sure that services respond to the things that matter most to people.

They will need the help of voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) groups and organisations to succeed.



PCNs will include:

- GP practices
- Pharmacies
- Community health services
- Mental health services
- Adult social care
- Voluntary organisations

Why PCNs are important to the VCSE sector

In many areas PCNs are just starting out. As they develop, many of their aims and values will be similar to those of the VCSE sector.

In time it is hoped that VCSE groups and organisations will become partners in the networks.

PCNs will be responsible for **working with their local communities** to:

- understand people's needs and experiences of health and care, and work with them to design better services;
- target support to the people most vulnerable to ill health, and who might not be using services;
- improve their health and well-being by connecting them to non-medical services in the community such as keep-fit classes, support groups, and benefits advice, for example;
- stop them from becoming unwell in the first place, often with the help of voluntary and community organisations;
- make sure that services provide "what matters most" to individuals and groups of people.

Key facts:

- 1250 PCNs in England
- Cover areas of between 40,000 - 50,000 people
- Each is led by a Clinical Director
- Some were started three or four years ago, but
- Most were established in July 2019
- Contract held by one of the GP practices in the network
- Each can appoint a 'link worker' to refer people to community support

How do I find my local PCN(s)?

- [Ask your GP practice](#)
- [Ask your local Healthwatch organisation](#)
- [Ask your local clinical commissioning group \(CCG\)](#)
- [Ask your local VCSE membership body](#)

Thinking about working with PCNs?

For further information on PCNs, and advice on how the VCSE sector could work with them, please visit: www.nationalvoices.org.uk/our-work/primary-care-networks

About National Voices

National Voices is the coalition of health and care charities in England, working for person-centred and community-based care to become mainstream. It is a member of the Health and Wellbeing Alliance.

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