

5.4 Better access to GPs and community care

Most people's experience of the NHS is their local GP, or the nurses and support staff who visit them at home or work in community clinics. Better access to care in GP surgeries and closer to home is better for patients and will also help reduce pressure on hospitals, A&E departments and ambulances.

We will:

- ♦ Ensure easier access to GPs, expanding evening and weekend opening, encouraging phone and Skype appointments, encouraging GPs to work together in federations, and allowing people more choice.
- ♦ Encourage GPs and other community clinicians to work in disadvantaged areas through our Patient Premium.
- ♦ Better utilise the network of community pharmacists across the country so they become the first point of contact for advice on minor illnesses and are joined-up with GPs and community health teams.
- ♦ Encourage health services to link up with Local Authority social care teams and voluntary services to join up care.
- ♦ Review the rules for exemption from prescription charges to ensure they are fair to those with long-term conditions and disabilities.

5.5 Aiming higher: following the evidence to improve health and care

We will set ambitious goals so everything we do in the NHS is focused on helping people in Britain live longer, healthier, lives. Early diagnosis is absolutely crucial and can make a life-saving difference, so we will support screening programmes where these are proven to be both clinically and cost-effective. It is also vital we invest in research to develop new treatments and find new ways of delivering innovative treatments in affordable ways.

We will:

- ♦ Set ambitious goals to improve outcomes for the most serious life-threatening diseases like cancer and long-term conditions like dementia.
- ♦ Work towards a global deal to release significant additional funds for finding a cure or preventive treatment for dementia, doubling NHS