

Strategic plan approved for council and NHS services

Health bosses will press ahead with proposals to radically overhaul how services are provided to patients despite a warning it could be “difficult to deliver” a three-year plan.

The Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (IJB), which oversees health and social care services in the Capital, has agreed to further integrate city council and NHS services in an attempt to provide an “affordable, sustainable and trusted health and social care system”.

But in a report to the board, officials said there was a risk the plan could be viewed as “overly optimistic, aspirational and difficult to deliver”. Concerns have also been raised the document has not taken the views of carers seriously in forming the strategy.

As part of the plan, an “Edinburgh Offer” will aim to tackle inequalities so that age, disability, and health conditions are no longer barriers to services. The Edinburgh Offer will focus on helping people to live independently for longer, shifting the balance of care from hospitals to the community under a “home first” approach.

But Liberal Democrat Cllr Robert Aldridge called for more input from construction companies. He said: “We need to engage with the house builders to make sure that the design of new housing is as future proof as possible to allow people of different abilities to stay in their homes.”

The IJB’s services are set to be transformed to provide a more

flexible way of working in an attempt to modernise systems and concentrate resources. Bosses have put faith in a “three conversations approach”, which will promote tailored care in a place which is best for patients, as early as possible.

Conservative Lothian MSP Miles Briggs said: “I welcome the improvements that have been implemented by the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board, but they still have a long way to go. “Edinburgh faces more challenges in the delivery of social care than any other authority in Scotland and these challenges will continue to grow with a growing and ageing population. Early prevention and the move towards more care in the community are key for meeting the challenges that social care in the capital faces.”

He added: “Community pharmacies can have an integral role in taking the pressure off GP practices and helping with the delivery of primary care across Edinburgh.

“Social isolation is one of the biggest problems across Edinburgh, with many people not having a social network which is so important for mental and physical health.”

Board member Christine Farquhar blasted the “very poor response from carers” as input for the strategic plan.

She added: “I think it’s quite disappointing we have not reached out to many carers. I feel there’s a job we have to do to improve our consultation process.”

Health bosses believe urgent change is needed for services to cope with an ageing population.



Cllr Ricky Henderson

Cllr Ricky Henderson, vice chairman of the Edinburgh IJB, said: "Edinburgh's population is expected to increase faster than any other city in Scotland and with that comes a number of very real challenges.

"The number of residents who are aged 85-plus is expected to more than double over the next 20 years. We need to accept that the status quo is unsustainable in the long term and our care systems need to evolve.

"Our strategic plan identifies new ways of delivering care so that we can better meet the current and future needs of Edinburgh citizens and, crucially, work to improve the

population's overall well-being."



David Bol is the Local Democracy Reporter covering Edinburgh. The Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) is a public service news agency : funded by the BBC, provided by the local news sector, and used by qualifying partners. Local Democracy Reporters cover top-tier local authorities and other public service organisations.