



Working together for patients and practices





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# **Foreword from our CEO**

Now in its 75th year, the NHS continues to evolve and face new challenges. From pandemics to structural reforms, it feels like an apt time to share our new three-year strategy.

We hope you enjoy reading it and that it helps you understand more about us. It explains how we support our local system as we all try to address the healthcare problems of today and tomorrow.

As a not-for-profit organisation, we exist to improve services for patients and help sustain General Practice. Like all parts of the system, we are working in an ever more challenging climate. Our strategy will help us keep delivering on our goals as we look to the future.

All GP practices in Sunderland are members of Sunderland GP Alliance (SGPA). We deliver a range of primary care services. This includes:

- Providing extra appointments on evenings and weekends, through Sunderland's Enhanced Access Service
- Supporting the system to tackle postpandemic delays and surges in demand
- Improving online access for patients via the Sunderland Health and Wellness Hub
- Recruiting clinicians in a variety of roles
- Providing direct access for GPs to pharmacists and social prescribers. This is on behalf of the city's Primary Care Networks (PCN)s.
- Running our own practices through Alliance Medical Group

Working with our members and partners has allowed us to create more capacity to support patients in primary care. We collaborate across many disciplines to develop new solutions. This is often in innovative and award winning ways!

We are an active member of All Together Better Sunderland. This is the city's adult care collaborative. We also work with other GP federations through the region's Primary Care Collaborative.

Our reputation is built on trust and understanding. We know that a vibrant primary care sector is a vital part of our local health economy. We have worked hard to create a positive culture and strong relationships. We believe this is key to developing the very best care for our patients.

The organisation has gone from strength to strength over the last eight years. Thanks to this, SGPA is a well-respected partner within the local health and care system. But now we need to think about the future and how we can build on our strong foundations.

Over the last six months, we have spoken to key partners and member practices. Their insight has helped up to develop our new three-year strategy. This document sets out our ambitions and strategic priorities for the future.

We look forward to continuing to work with you all to deliver on these.







**About Sunderland GP Alliance** 

Sunderland GP Alliance (SGPA) was set up in 2015. Our purpose is to help GPs to work together for the benefit of patients and staff.

All GP practices in Sunderland are members of SGPA. This means we are owned by the practices in the City. We do not make a profit. We reinvest any money we make to help improve services for patients.

SGPA runs three GP practices in the City through our Alliance Medical Group. These practices serve around 25,000 patients. We also provide services to a small number of people within the Special Allocation Service.

Our aim is to help general practice respond to the changing needs of the health system and the huge demands on GPs. Some practices may struggle to deliver some of the services we provide on their own. There are now around 250 people who work for SGPA. They help to provide lots of different support services for GPs across the city.

You can see a list of our member practices at the end of this document.



# How we work

Our Board of Directors includes GPs and a Practice Nurse. All of our Board members currently work in GP practices in the city.

Between them, they have vast experience. This means they know best how to look after patients and how to work with other parts of the NHS. Working with our partners is a vital part of what we do. Together, we can create a much more joined up experience of care for our patients.

As a Board, we place great value in listening to patient views. It is important that we hear about peoples' experiences. Patients can share their views in a number of ways. This could be through local Patient Participation Groups or practice feedback forms. All of our member practices have ways for people to feedback. We always consider the views of patients when we are thinking about how to change and improve services.

### Who we are



Dr James Bell Chair



Jon Twelves
Chief Executive



Dr Martin Weatherhead Director



Dr Tracey Lucas

Director



Dr Fadi Khalil Director



Dr Rory Mackinnon Director



Dr Jon Sumner *Director* 



Dr Raj Bethapudi *Director* 



April Place
Nurse Director

To read more about our Board Members and our Senior Management Team scan here:



Sunderland GP Alliance Strategy



# Our values

We believe that how we deliver our services is as important as what we do. Our values run throughout SGPA. They are what we believe in and what we stand for:

**Candour** – We are open and honest with patients, staff and colleagues.

**Respect** – We show respect for everyone we come into contact with.

**Innovation** – We embrace change, opportunities and new ideas.

**Safety** – We provide high quality care in a safe working environment.

**Pro-active** – We anticipate our customer needs and go the extra mile to meet them.

We have worked hard to make SGPA a great place to work. We have achieved a silver Green Impact Award and a bronze Better Health at Work Award. We have also had recent success at the 2022 General Practice Awards and The Brighter Ideas in Health Awards, as well as being shortlisted for 2023.

**NUS Green Impact** 

SILVER AWARD
Delivered by Students Organising for Sustainability - UK







# What we do

We have many roles within our local health and care system. We work hard to provide a collective voice for general practice and engage with our members in lots of ways. This allows us to make sure we represent the views of our member practices in system wide discussions.

We are a member of All Together Better Sunderland. ATB is an adult care collaborative of all health and care partners in the City. Working together, the aim is to help improve care for adults in the community setting.

We also work with the six Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in Sunderland to deliver a range of services. These include:

- Sunderland Enhanced Access Service (SEAS)
- Clinical Pharmacy
- Social Prescribing Service
- Ambulatory ECG
- Sunderland Clinical Support Information (CSI)
- Sunderland Health and Wellness Hub
- Career start programmes for primary care
- MDTs/Frailty







# **Sunderland Enhanced Access Service (SEAS)**

The Enhanced Access Service offers patients more choice of where and when to see a GP.

This includes evenings and at weekends when practices are closed. Patients can go to a number of locations across the city to access this service. It includes same-day and routine appointments for things like:

- chronic disease management clinics
- smear tests
- health checks and blood tests

### The service provides...

Over **44,000** appointments per year.

That's **300** extra hours of general practice services a week.

Which is the equivalent of having an additional GP practice in Sunderland.

In just three months, from April 23 to June 23 we have provided...

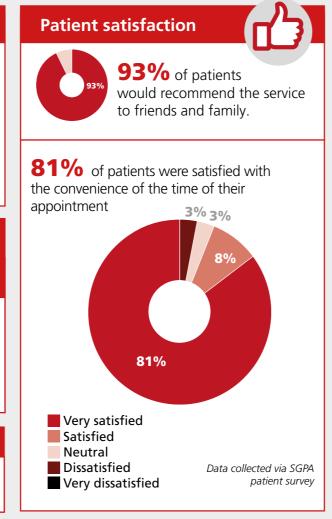


- **15,215** appointments across the city
- **10,743** of those appointments were with either a GP or an Advanced Nurse Practitioner.

### **CQC Rating**

10

CQC rated all areas Good With **Outstanding Leadership** 



# **Clinical Pharmacy**

### We also provide clinical pharmacy services on behalf of the six Sunderland PCNs.

Our Clinical Pharmacy team has been instrumental in the achievement of medicines investment and impact funding across the city.

We employ 55 pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. These are funded through the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS). They are aligned to individual practices. This means the practice has access to on site pharmacist expertise.

The pharmacy team also run a medicines discharge hub. This is for practices who want to process the medications from their patient's discharge from hospital centrally.

We have seen a number of benefits for GPs. This includes freeing up more GP time and reducing potential medication errors.

### **Support to practices**

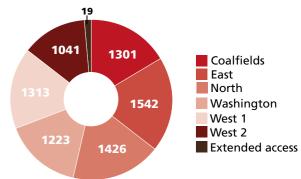


- Over **59,000** clinical pharmacist patient contact/ interventions a year
- Over **30,000** pharmacy technician patient contact/ interventions a year
- Completion of over 22,000 admin tasks
- Medicines discharge hub supporting over **21,500** hospital discharges

# **Medication reviews**



- **3,400** long-term condition medication reviews
- Over **7,900** structured medication reviews across the city



# Care home support

• **92%** of all care home residents had a structured medication review.

### **Prescribing**

**• 6.75%** reduction in patients over 65 prescribed 10 or more medicines

# **GP** satisfaction



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• 88% of GPs say our pharmacy team has helped reduce their workload.

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# **Social Prescribing Service**

We also provide the Sunderland General Practice Social Prescribing Service. We have a dedicated team of 24 people who work with GP practices to offer support to patients. The team includes Health and Wellbeing Coaches, Care Co-ordinators and Social Prescribers.

The team work with patients across the city with non-medical needs. The team will support patients in their own community to

help

them improve their own wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.

#### Referrals

Over **7,400** referrals a year

### **Health Coaches**



of patients need support with weight management, long-term conditions, mobility, physical inactivity, alcohol and substance misuse or living with cancer.

**Care Co-ordinators** 



of patients need lower level support and co-ordination of care in the community

**247** Food parcels distributed

### **Social Prescribers**

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of patients have more complex needs that require a plan

### Positive patient improvements in:

| Satisfaction | 65.8% |  |
|--------------|-------|--|
| Wellbeing    | 63.2% |  |
| Happiness    | 68.8% |  |
| Anxiety      | 56.7% |  |
|              |       |  |

# Top 5 reasons for referral: 1. Mental health support 20% 2. Social isolation 14.5% 3. Weight management 14.1% 4. Financial Advice 11.2% 5. Long-term condition management 9%

#### **Outcomes**

- **84%** of patients contacted within 0-2 days
- 41% face to face support and increasing
- Outreach work resulted in 169 complex patient direct referrals
- Over **500+** referrals from Clinical Pharmacy
- Working with patients for an average of 38 days. (National average is 42 days)
- **29,112** onward referrals to NHS or voluntary community services

#### **Partner feedback**

**72%** found the service beneficial and would recommend to colleagues

**83%** said their patients/services users found the service beneficial

# **Alliance Medical Group**

As well as the clinical services we provide for primary care, we also run three GP practices across the City through our own Alliance Medical Group.

These are:

- South Hylton Surgery
- New Silksworth Medical Practice
- Monument Surgeries.



The practices deliver high quality patient care covering the range of standard primary care services, plus additional services such as smoking cessation, vaccinations and family planning. Our team of doctors, nurses and advanced practitioners are supported by a number of healthcare assistants, clinical pharmacists and support staff.

Collectively, our Alliance Medical Group practices provide core general practice services to around 25,000 patients. All three practices are rated 'good' by the Care Quality Commission with many areas of outstanding practice.

Through our Alliance Medical Group, we have been able to work with partners to help support and stabilise primary care provision in parts of the City that may otherwise have been left vulnerable.

CQC rated good with Outstanding leadership



Our services at New Silksworth and Monument Surgeries are delivered through APMS contracts. Our services at South Hylton are delivered through a standard GMS contract. All of our practices are 'Research Active.' This means that we work with the NHS National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). We promote research and give our patients the chance to take part in research studies.

We only take part in research that:

- benefits our patients
- is in collaboration with trusted research groups



### **AllianceCare**

Our practices all use a new online triage and patient flow management system called AllianceCare.

This is a quick, easy and secure way for patients to access services. They can use it to book appointments, order repeat prescriptions and view their records. It reduces waiting times and gets people faster access to the right treatment, first time.



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# **Ambulatory ECG**

The Ambulatory ECG service allows GPs to request a 24 hour to 7 day ambulatory ECG without having to make a hospital referral.

Patients who are low risk can get an ECG in a location close to their home within one week. The service runs from three hubs in Sunderland.

The service will fit an ECG monitor to the patient. This will stay on for 24 hours to 7 days to help diagnose what is wrong. Results go back to the referring GP for follow up.

# **Sunderland Clinical Support Information (CSI)**

Sunderland CSI is managed by Sunderland GP Alliance. It is a decision support tool for primary care clinicians. It is used to find up-to-date clinical pathway information, service information, patient leaflets and local contacts.

The system has an average of 4,300 views a month. There are 315 pathways and 190 service pages live in the system. All of which helps to reduce inappropriate referrals and clinical risk.



# **Career start programmes for primary care**

The Career Start Fellowship Scheme is a two year programme for newly qualified GPs and practice nurses.

The scheme encourages working within and across Primary Care Networks. This leads to more opportunities for integrated working and varied work experience.

Each host practice receives a financial contribution. This allows GPs and nurses to take part in professional development, mentoring and peer networking.

Fellowships provide a great opportunity to invest in shaping the future of General Practice.

# **MDTs/Frailty**

Our ageing population continues to grow. So does the number of frail people living in our local community.

We know that more people are living with long term health conditions. We also know that people in Sunderland don't live as long at they do in other areas of the country.

That's why the PCNs in Sunderland have invested in community Frailty Teams. These teams ensure that patients living with frailty get the right care, at the right time, by the right service.

The frailty teams work with the 'Community Integrated Team.' Together, they support patients at risk of becoming frail and those who are frail.

This helps us to deliver joined-up care and avoid any duplication.

# **Sunderland Health and Wellness Hub**

The Sunderland Health and Wellness Hub (SHWH) is a website for patients that provides easy access to local information. Patients can use the hub to find trusted, local NHS information and self-refer to a number of services. The website also links directly to the NHS app. This links seamlessly to GP practices across Sunderland.

Since its launch in April 2023, the Sunderland Health and Wellness Hub has had **21,061** visits.

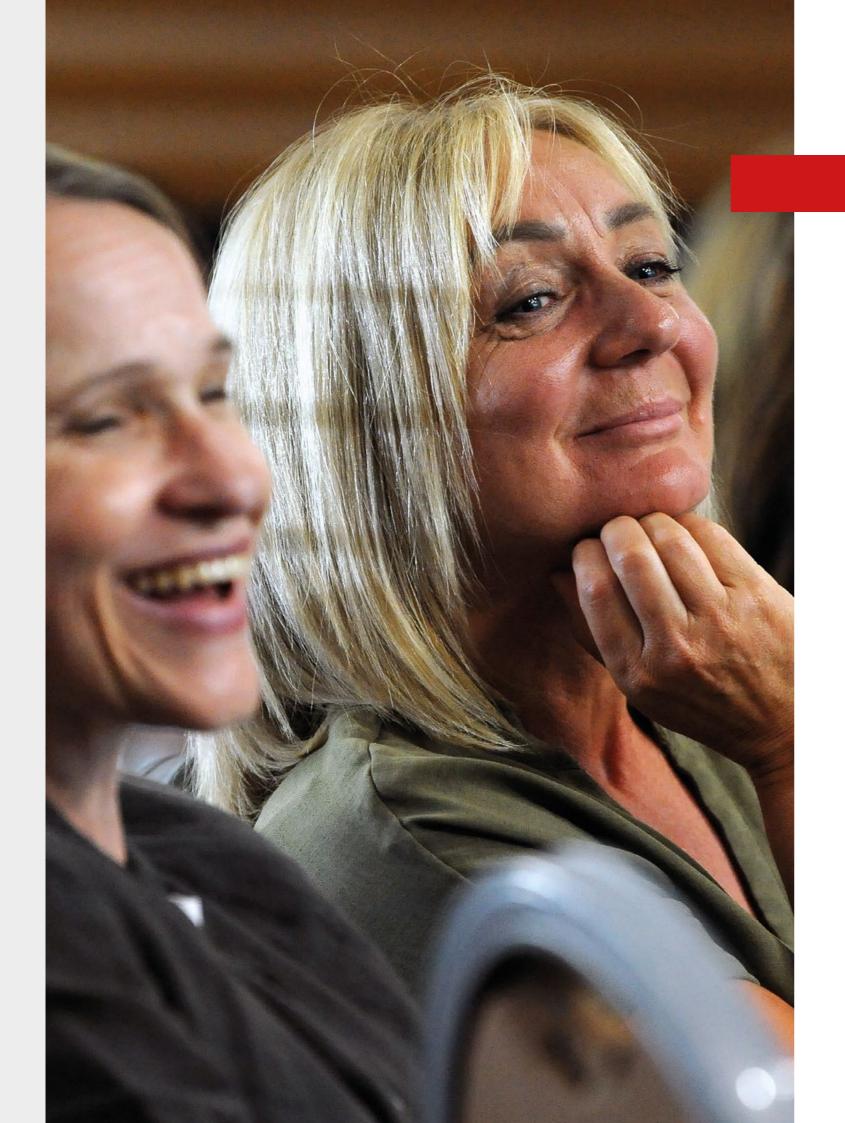




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# **Developing our new three year strategy**

In March 2023, SGPA held a Board strategy session. We used this time to consider our goals for the organisation. We also thought about the context of the NHS today and the challenges we face.

# **Context and challenges**

### **Funding**

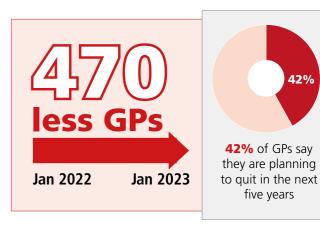
There is no doubt that NHS funding is under pressure. Despite an increase in healthcare spending over the next two years, in reality this represents a decrease in real terms once you take into account the impact of inflation.

Here in the North East and North Cumbria, our new Integrated Care Board (ICB) is under pressure too. This is the new body responsible for the NHS in the region. It will see a reduction in growth of cash funding over the next two years. We don't know how this will affect primary care.

It's also not yet clear how the NHS will fund the recent pay award for Agenda for Change staff. If it has to come from existing resources, this will place further pressure on funding for other NHS services. Although the pay award doesn't affect most staff in general practice, we still need to be aware of the impact. We also need to consider the impact of inflation on staff salaries.

### Workforce

There is a chronic shortage of clinical skills in primary care including GPs, Advanced Nurse Practitioners and Practice Nurses. In January 2023, there were 27,287 full-time qualified GPs. That is 470 or 1.7% less than a year earlier. Meanwhile, 42% of GPs say they are planning to quit in the next five years.



This is in direct contrast of the Government's target to recruit 6,000 new GPs. In Sunderland, our qualified permanent GP numbers have remained stable since 2018. Yet the number of GP partners has reduced. Developing more out-of-hospital services could be delayed if we don't have the right clinical skills for delivery. Meanwhile, work has to be shared across a smaller workforce adding more stress and a lack of capacity to engage in system transformation and leadership.

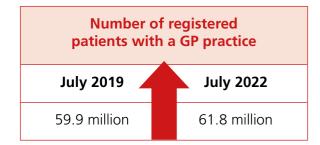


### **Changes in the GP contract**

This is the final year of the five-year GP framework. This means we can expect more changes to the GP contract from 2024/25. There is uncertainty about what these changes might be. We don't know yet how they will affect general practice. They will include national plans for Primary Care Networks (PCNs). A large amount of funding and staffing depend on PCNs. There is also debate about how sustainable the partnership model is for the future. We expect there to be some engagement about this during 2023/24. We also expect national plans to build further on the Fuller Stocktake.

### Pressures on the system

We have a growing population where more people are living longer with more long term health conditions. The demands on General Practice, and the wider health system, will continue to grow in volume and complexity. Practices are currently seeing more patients than ever before.





People expect services to be more responsive and meet their needs quickly and conveniently. This continues to filter through to all public services.

Secondary care continues to dominate the news agenda. Emergency Department performance and hospital waiting lists are a priority for the Government. There may be a risk that limited funding will be diverted to address these problems. Access to primary care is, however, also a priority as evidenced in the 'Delivery plan for recovering access to primary care' published in May 2023. There is a concern that this could lead to further unfunded pressure on practices without any accompanying resource.

### **SGPA** business model

Sunderland GP Alliance is a not-for-profit organisation. Unlike other companies who can build up funds in reserve to use during tougher times, we cannot do this. Our not-for-profit approach, and commitment to delivering services for members at cost, means we do not have funds in reserve. This leaves us potentially vulnerable.

Lots of our contracts are short-term contracts. Including those facilitated by the Network Contract DES. Other sources of funding are opportunistic and depend on nationally driven transformation programmes. This makes long-term planning difficult.

# New NHS landscape and infrastructure

Whilst the value and role of SGPA is well understood, GP federations like ours are not statutory organisations (like NHS Trusts), nor mandated (such as is the case with provider collaboratives). This means we remain vulnerable to changes in policy direction. A change in government, could also significantly affect our operating environment.

Locally, following the development of the Integrated Care Board and the merger of local trusts to form South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, there is a potential for commissioners and other partners to support closer working with South Tyneside and Durham federations as members of the same local Integrated Care Partnership (ICP).

Following the changes in the commissioning environment, SGPA has invested time in developing a collaborative of NENC federations, and early attempts to develop a region-wide Primary Care Collaborative. This will ensure that, however the wider operating environment develops, our member practices will have an opportunity to respond to, and influence, developments whether that be at place or, where appropriate, at ICB level.



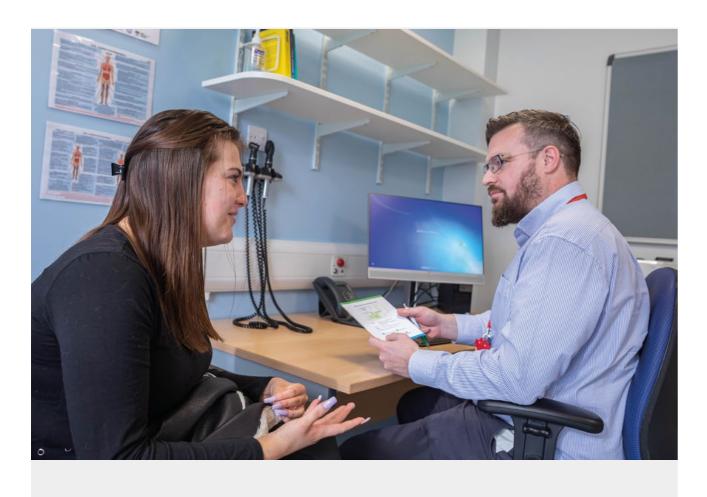




# **Our strategic priorities**

Our new three-year strategy focuses on how we can work together to support our member practices to meet the challenges that lie ahead. To do this we will focus on three strategic objectives:

- 1. Supporting local GP practices
- 2. Always striving to be better
- 3. Widening our service offer



# **Objective one – Supporting local GP practices**

1. We will work with member practices to respond to the funding, workforce and demand challenges, enabling practices to remain sustainable and retain their individual identity.

### How will we do this?

- We will be a representative of, and advocate for, general practice in system level conversations, making the most of the strength a collective voice can bring.
- We will ensure partner organisations understand the contribution that our members make to the overall system, the pressures they are under and help in the development of suitable responses to protect and enhance services for the city's residents.
- We will support the creation of primary care collaboratives at a regional level, and engage in national conversations to promote policies that help sustain practices, improve services for patients, and champion appropriate levels of funding and the maintenance of the partnership model.
- Working with our member practices, we will consider opportunities to provide services collectively, where it's appropriate to do so, to realise economies of scale without compromising practice independence.

- We will help develop a workforce plan for general practice to address the chronic shortage of clinical skills, and support our member practices with recruitment and retention, working closely with local universities and promoting the city as a place to live and work.
- We will support Primary Care Networks (PCNs) with their employment of staff available through the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS), increasing capacity and the availability of specialist skill sets.
- We will review opportunities to reduce practice running costs and, in particular, facilities management and service charges.
- We will work with the ICB to consider how practices can best be supported to deliver medicines optimisation initiatives that improve clinical quality, and that reduce overall system costs.
- We will share our experience of implementing an online triage system to help members make more informed decisions on the suitability of such systems for their practice to help improve access.

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# Objective two – Always striving to be better

2. We will continuously look for opportunities to improve our services so that we can continue to work on behalf of, and add more value to, member practices, patients, and the wider system for many years to come.

### How will we do this?

- We will carry out a comprehensive review of our cost base to ensure the maximum possible resource is available for front-line services.
- We will invest in our business intelligence systems to ensure we have the necessary data to manage the organisation in the most efficient and effective manner.
- We will continue to invest in the practices we run in Washington, Silksworth and South Hylton, to both improve service quality and accessibility for patients.
- We will continue to invest in our clinical pharmacy and social prescribing services, where it will enhance our ability to reduce GP workload, improve quality or generate efficiency savings.
- We will ensure we are ready for any changes in the Network Contract DES, to ensure we can respond effectively to changes in NHS policy.

- We will develop a research offer for member practices, to create an attractive proposition for research partners and improve the health of the local population.
- We will continue to develop our culture, including the achievement of the silver Better Health at Work award, and recognition as a Sunday Times Best Place to Work, to support recruitment and retention.
- We will continue to showcase our examples of outstanding service provision through conference presentations and awards, building on the recent success of the Pharmacy and Digital Innovation teams.

# **Objective three – Widening our service offer**

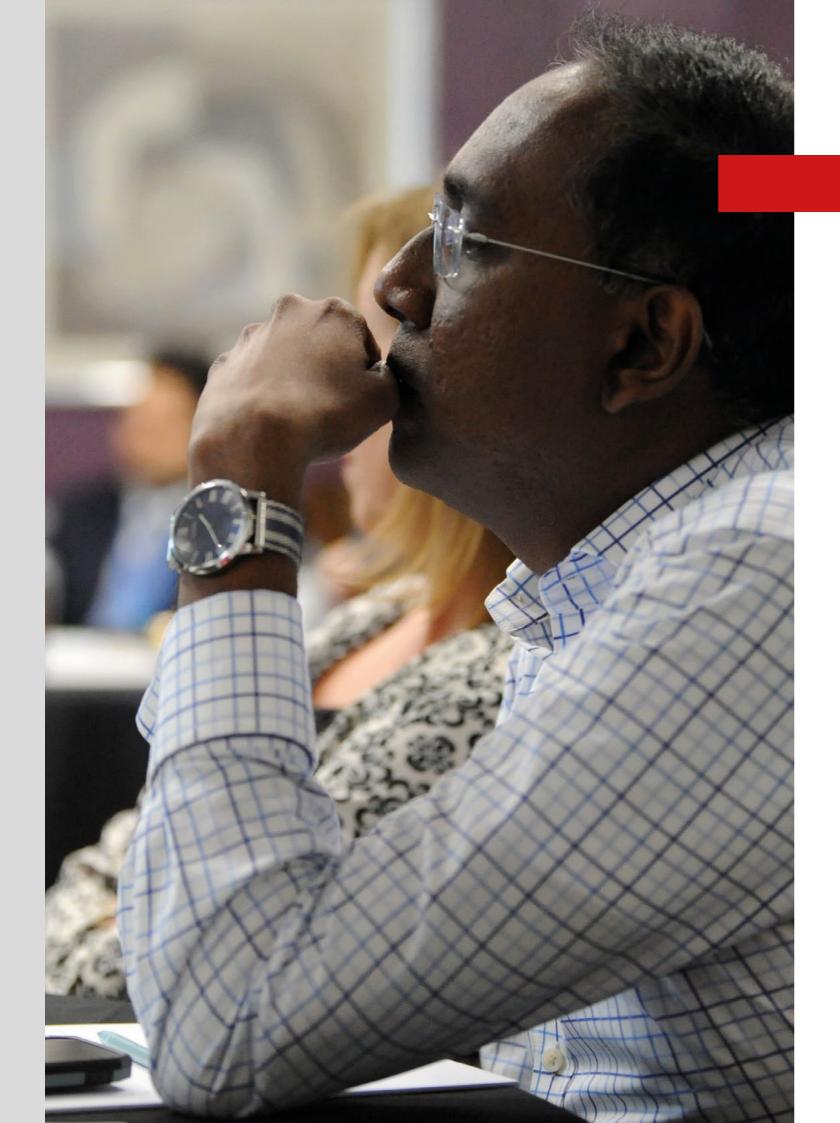
3. We will look for opportunities to offer new and better services to patients, building on the strengths we have developed as an organisation over the last eight years.

### How will we do this?

- We will explore opportunities for delivering healthcare related services outside of core general practice, where they complement existing service provision and build on our existing strengths.
- Recognising the strength of other local partners, such as the University of Sunderland, we will work to develop partnerships that build on the expertise of both partners, enhancing the reputation of the city.
- We will explore opportunities to support healthcare systems across the region, working with other GP federations to deliver services that are best provided at a bigger scale.

- We will work with other parts of the healthcare system to consider where we can provide services more conveniently and closer to our communities.
- We will explore how the expertise we have developed in some of our award-winning services can be used to benefit health systems in other parts of the country.
- We will engage with the region's secondary care Provider Collaborative to understand how we can work together to improve services in both sectors.

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# **Closing remarks from our Chair**

General practice is at the heart of our communities across Sunderland. We are there for people in the most important times of their lives. For generations we have been a constant source of comfort and advice on so many of life's challenges – all of which have an impact on health.

Having worked as a GP in the city for 24 years I am immensely proud of the work we all do. Whatever your role is within general practice, everyone's contribution is equally important. That's what makes general practice a team sport. Together we look after over 290,000 people in Sunderland and deliver around 5000 appointments every single day. That equates to over 1.25 million a year. There is no doubt in the value we bring to peoples' lives.

The road ahead is certainly not an easy one. I am very aware of the challenges we face. This is not only in primary care but across the whole NHS and wider health and care sector. There is also no doubt that our work, through SGPA, has made a positive impact.

We are now the largest GP alliance in the North East and Cumbria. We are also amongst a group of leading federations in the NHS nationally.

As we look to the future, we want to keep helping you do what you all do best. That is, looking after patients and improving quality of life for people in Sunderland. They deserve no less.

We will need to keep innovating and thinking differently to keep pace with the challenges ahead. Through our alliance infrastructure we will continue to provide a platform for collaboration and improvement.

I am proud of the alliance we have grown together over the past eight years. As we publish our new three-year strategy, it feels like an important crossroads in time for the NHS

With your continued support, we will keep doing all that we can to make sure primary care is thriving in Sunderland. Whether that is through creating new attractive and rewarding roles, helping people feel happy and satisfied in their work, or being your voice on regional and national issues. We exist to support you.

We will continue to listen and respond to make sure we have strong general practices in Sunderland. We want to keep building on the positive culture of collaboration we have grown so far. Together, I am confident, we can continue to make more positive changes happen for the people we serve. Thank you all for your support.



Dr James Bell Chair





# **Appendix**

# **Our member practices by Primary Care Network (PCN)**



### **Sunderland North**

Castletown Medical Centre www.castletownmedicalcentre.nhs.uk

Bridge View Medical Group www.bridgeviewmedicalgroup.nhs.uk

Fulwell Medical Centre www.fulwellmedicalcentre.nhs.uk

Dr Gellia & Dr Balaraman www.monkwearmouthhc.nhs.uk

Redhouse Medical Centre www. redhousemedicalcentre.nhs.uk

St Bede Medical Centre www. stbedegpsunderland.co.uk

#### **Sunderland East**

Ashburn Medical Centre www.ashburnmedicalcentre.nhs.uk

Riverview Surgery www.riverviewsurgery.nhs.uk

Deerness Park Medical Group www.deernesspark.co.uk

Southlands Medical Group www.southlandsmedicalgroup.nhs.uk

Park Lane Practice www.parklanepracticesunderland.nhs.uk

Villette Surgery www.villettesurgery.nhs.uk

#### **Sunderland West One**

Wearside Medical Practice www.wearsidemedicalpractice.co.uk

Pallion Family Practice www.pallionfamilypractice.nhs.uk

Millfield Medical Group www.millfieldmedicalcentre.nhs.uk

Forge Medical Practice www.theoldforgesurgery.nhs.uk

Chester Surgery www.elsafygp.nhs.uk

Hylton Medical Group www.hyltonmedicalgroup.nhs.uk

### **Sunderland West Two**

Broadway Medical Practice www.broadwaymedicalpractice.nhs.uk

Springwell Medical Group www.springwellmedicalgroup.nhs.uk

South Hylton Surgery www.alliancemedicalgroupsunderland.nhs. uk/south-hylton-surgery/

Village Surgery www.villagesurgerysilksworth.nhs.uk

Happy House Surgery www.happyhousesurgery.nhs.uk

New Silksworth Medical Practice www.alliancemedicalgroupsunderland.nhs. uk/new-silksworth-medical-practice/

# Washington

Concord Medical Practice www.concordmedicalpractice.nhs.uk

Galleries Medical Centre www.galleriesmedicalpractice.nhs.uk

Rickleton Medical Centre www.rickletonmedicalcentre.nhs.uk

New Washington Medical Group www.newwashingtonmedicalgroup.nhs.uk

The Stephenson Medical Practice www.drstephensonconcord.nhs.uk

Monument Surgeries www.alliancemedicalgroupsunderland. nhs.uk/monument-surgeries-washington-barmston/

### **Coalfields**

Grangewood Surgery www.grangewoodgp.nhs.uk

Herrington Medical Centre www.herringtonmc.nhs.uk

Hetton Group Practice www.hettongp.nhs.uk

Houghton Medical Group www.houghtonmedicalgroup.nhs.uk

Kepier Medical Practice www.kepiergp.nhs.uk

Westbourne Medical Group www.westbournegp.nhs.uk

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