



Foreword by Professor Sir Liam Donaldson...

Over the past year I've seen first-hand the passion and commitment of people across our health and care organisations who are all focused on doing the very best for our communities.

We have much to be proud of thanks to the strong partnerships and collaborative working which have been built on over many years.

In recent years, we have made some improvements to health with the number of people dying from cancer or heart disease decreasing and fewer people smoking.

The quality of our health and care services are rated amongst some of the best in England. But despite all of this we still have some of the poorest health outcomes in the country. Something which our communities have endured for far too long.

Facts and figures about the health of people in the region, and their lived experience, make for uncomfortable reading. For instance, we know men living in our region spend almost a quarter of their lives in ill health.

We have the second highest rates of heart disease and liver disease in the

country and our rates of respiratory disease are 42% higher than the national average.

In nine of our 13 local authority areas there is a healthy life expectancy of less than 60 years. In the south of England there are only four areas out of 67 that are this low.

I am always conscious of the fact that behind these statistics are individuals and communities. People who could be enjoying a longer and healthier life. A child who could be thriving - not just surviving, and getting the very best start in life, which we know is so important for our future generations.

So, if you were to ask me what this document is about - it is about building a new momentum which sets out our shared ambition and desire to change this and make a real difference for the people in our region.

This Integrated Care Strategy is a joint plan between our local authorities, the NHS and our partners including the community, voluntary and social enterprise sector. It starts to set out our goals to address the many challenges we have been grappling with for some time.

It describes out how we will reduce the gap between how long people live in the North East and North Cumbria compared to the rest of England, so that our communities live longer, healthier and happier lives.

Our plans describe how we will ensure fairer health outcomes for people as we know not everyone has the same opportunities to be healthy because of the environments where they are born, grow up, live, work, and their age too.

Alongside this, we want to ensure our health and care services are not only highquality but the same quality - no matter where you live and who you are.

That they are also joined-up and that people have the same access to the right care.

We know that our ambitions cannot be achieved without supporting our committed workforce who are crucial to our success – this includes looking after their physical and mental wellbeing and building a health and care workforce for the future.

This strategy document has been developed in partnership with many people and organisations. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to and shared their views which have helped us to shape and develop this document. We have more to do to discuss, involve and engage with our communities about their lived experiences and how we improve their health and experience of health and care services. But the discussions we have had, and the comments we have received, have all been invaluable and we have reflected this within this document.

We recognise we are publishing this plan at a challenging time for everyone including the NHS and social care. We know that we are yet to understand the full impact of the pandemic, services are still in recovery, and rising energy costs and the cost-of-living crisis is of grave concern for all and impacting significantly on the quality of life for our citizens.

As a result, it is fair to say there have been some debates as to whether we are we being too ambitious, given these challenges.

I would argue this is exactly why we need to be ambitious and clear about what it is we want to change, together. Because we can't keep doing the same thing if we want different results.

So, this really is just the start – we will continue to engage and involve our communities in the months and years ahead. I have no doubt that this plan will continue to evolve.

We have set a vision and ambitions which we hope will mean that, in time, all our communities can live healthier and happier lives.

Bringing this plan to life, making it happen - is what we all want to see. I have no doubt we can do that, together.



Professor Sir Liam Donaldson
Chair of the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

