

Friday, 24th November 2023

Lochaber Times Column

As we head towards Christmas and with 2024 coming around the corner fast it is a good time to reflect on where we are with the redesign of health and social care services in Lochaber.

Planning for the new Hospital is progressing well with the design team working closely with clinicians in line with the original Initial Agreement and the further modelling work that has taken place since then. We continue to update community members at the monthly stakeholder meetings and we plan to share the draft plans very shortly. I am sure seeing the designs will really cement a feeling of progress that the staff are feeling!

As you all know, the new Hospital will be a tremendous addition to Lochaber. It has also become a catalyst for change, presenting a natural opportunity, especially after Covid, to pause and look at how we can best provide the services we offer and support people to be as healthy as they can be. There is an enormous network of people experiencing and providing care in our community and it is essential that we consider all aspects of health, care and wellbeing as we plan for the future.

The Hospital is clearly only one part of a complex jigsaw of services that are needed to meet your needs as a community. Health and care in the community is complex and far reaching given our geography, covering a wide range of services primarily delivered with people in their own homes with the aim to improve better outcomes for people. They include short term and ongoing health and social care services, palliative care, mental health services, primary care services, health promotion work to name but a few which involve a multitude of professionals.

Following a public consultation last year, we are committed to reviewing health and care services in the community looking at ways to improve their delivery and enhance the experience for everyone who, at some point, may need to access care. With that in mind our local team are working on proposed changes to the delivery of health and care services within the community with a number of workshops taking place to ensure close collaboration with a network of partners.

There is a lot of evidence that shows care in people's home helps with recuperation. It supports people's ability to remain independent and to sleep better which greatly helps and leads to better mental wellbeing. Key to our redesign will be looking at early interventions offering support and services to people before their health condition escalates, for example, how can we improve people's mobility at a younger age to avoid issues later in life. Our third sector colleagues and wider partners are essential for supporting people in the community to live healthier lives for longer. As part of the review of services the team are always keen to hear from people who might be considering a career in community health care.

Working in community care, especially in such a close-knit community as Lochaber, can be really rewarding especially when you can visibly see the positive change you can bring to someone.

There are many roles offering career progression and we are keen to provide more information to people who may have an interest.

We have a great team in Lochaber and with the proposed developments, it's exciting times to be working in the across health and social care.

Anyone interested in finding out more about recruitment opportunities can contact Karen-Anne on 07825 281 905 or karen-anne.wilson@nhs.scot and to keep up to date with the proposed changes in Lochaber's community care services visit:

<https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/about/service-redesign/lochaber-health-and-social-care-redesign/>

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