



Summary of "The Future of Healthcare in Wantage" Talk - 21/11/2025 – Dr Carrie Ladd

A talk was delivered to the Patient Participation Group (PPG) via Zoom and in NSP waiting room, providing an overview of current healthcare challenges and the innovative solutions being implemented at Newbury Street Practice.

Newbury Street Practice Mission 2025

- The practice's updated mission statement was shared, centring on providing safe, effective, and compassionate care.
- Core values identified by the team are kindness, professionalism, and teamwork.
- The mission emphasises a commitment to continuous improvement, evidence-based practice, and supporting staff well-being to ensure a sustainable service.

Global & National Healthcare Challenges in 2025

- **Workforce Shortages:** Declining number of GP partners nationally over the last decade.
- **Funding:** A significant mismatch exists, with primary care handling ~90% of NHS contacts but receiving only ~10% of the funding.
- **Rising Demand:** Newbury Street offered 69,000 appointments in 2018-19, which increased to 81,900 in 2024-25. Last year, there were 4,638 missed appointments (DNAs).
- **Staff Burnout:** National surveys indicate nearly a third of GPs may leave the profession within five years due to stress and workload. This highlights the importance of the practice's measures to support staff well-being.
- **Increasing Complexity:** An ageing population and advanced treatments mean more complex, multi-morbid conditions are managed in primary care, which were previously hospital-based.
- **Patient Expectations & Satisfaction:** National satisfaction with the NHS has fallen dramatically, while patient expectations for faster, digital access have risen.

The NHS Long Term Plan & Newbury Street's Innovations

The talk outlined how Newbury Street Practice is already implementing many strategies proposed in the NHS's ten-year plan.

1. Analogue to Digital

- **Existing Technology:** Long-standing use of Accurx for text/video, online triage, and a cloud-based phone system.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Use of an AI scribe to automatically summarise consultations, improving efficiency and allowing for better patient interaction. This has been well-received by patients. AI is also used to process clinical letters, saving significant administrative time.

- **Remote Monitoring:** Patient data from devices (e.g., blood sugar monitors) is sent directly to practice nurses for review and management advice.

2. Hospital to Community

- **Integrated Neighbourhood Team:** A weekly multi-disciplinary team meeting in Wantage (with Church Street Practice, social workers, geriatricians, etc.) to create collaborative care plans for complex patients.
- **Community Diagnostics & Clinics:** Utilising the Community Diagnostic Centre in Cowley and hosting secondary care clinics (e.g., ENT, ophthalmology) at Wantage Community Hospital.
- **Virtual Wards & Hospital at Home:** Actively using these services in Oxfordshire to manage patients (e.g., babies with bronchiolitis, patients needing IV therapy) at home, preventing hospital admissions.

3. Sickness to Prevention

- **Health Campaigns:** Successful campaigns such as the 'Pink Pants' campaign for cervical screening uptake.
- **Proactive Care:** Hosting services like smoking cessation, weight loss, and diabetic eye screening at the practice for closer to home access for patients
- **Lifestyle Medicine:** Innovative projects like 'gardening on prescription' and 'cooking on prescription' to focus on preventative health.
- **Genomics:** The future may include pharmacogenetic testing in primary care to personalise medication (e.g., statins) and avoid side effects, a practice already in place in countries like Denmark.

The Future: AI GP?

- A provocative look at the future, discussing research from Denmark on AI-driven avatars acting as GPs for minor conditions. This raised the question of whether patients are ready for such technology and its potential to revolutionise access to care.

Summary:

Dr. Ladd's presentation summarised the current challenges facing healthcare globally and, in the UK, such as workforce shortages, funding gaps, rising patient demand, and staff burnout. She highlighted that despite these pressures, Newbury Street Practice is proactively implementing many solutions proposed in the NHS's ten-year plan. The core message was that the "future of healthcare" is already being delivered at Newbury Street through a focus on: Digital Transformation, Shifting Care to the Community and Prioritising Prevention. Ultimately, Dr. Ladd conveyed that while the national picture is challenging, the practice is committed to innovation and collaboration to provide a sustainable, high-quality service for the Wantage community, embodying the principles of their mission statement.