

## QUESTION 7

### COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 21 JULY 2022

#### Question to Cllr Jessel Cabinet Member for Health and Care

By Cllr Pardesi

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#### Question

Residents are continually telling me they no longer even bother trying to get a GP appointment. They just go straight to A and E. With people also dying waiting for ambulances, what is the County Council doing to hold the local NHS to account for its failures during what has become a dangerous health service crisis?

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#### Reply

It has been clear for a long time that the NHS, including access to GPs, is under considerable pressure. Demand is rising and the NHS is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff. This was evident before Covid and has been exacerbated by the pandemic. We have seen 'Major Incidents' called several times by the County's acute trusts over the past twelve months such as has been the pressures on the system. It is important that we all work together to try and support the NHS to manage these pressures in an effective way.

Our Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for holding the NHS to account and includes colleagues from County as well as District and Borough councils. The Committee regularly calls on the NHS to provide assurance that their services are operating to the standards we expect.

The Committee scrutinised management of NHS pressures in December 2021 and access to GPs in July and December 2021 – and the webcast is available on the Council's website. The Committee's work programme for 2022/23 outlines planned scrutiny of the NHS – and the September meeting includes a further agenda item to scrutinise how system pressures will be managed. I would also draw attention to the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22 (which forms part of today's Council agenda), whereby reference is given to the ongoing scrutiny of GP access.