

Hungerford is one of the healthiest places to live in Britain. It is well served with a medical practice, health centre, two dental practices, two opticians and a growing number of complementary health practitioners. There is good access to hospitals in Swindon and Newbury and a dispensing chemist is located in the High Street. However, in line with national trends, the proportion of elderly residents will increase in the coming years. The requirements for services to support both the health and social care needs of an ageing population will continue to grow over the next decade.

As a relatively small community competing for limited resources, the town must ensure that it develops and maintains a voice in determining that its needs are met. The establishment of effective pressure groups is paramount if Hungerford is to halt the drift of resources towards Newbury, Swindon and Reading, and maintain, if not improve, existing services.



Policies

Encourage the provision of all health services to meet the needs of local people.

Ensure that all existing health services continue to be available in the town and resist moves to transfer any of them elsewhere.

Promote healthy lifestyles for local people.

Key Actions

- Examine the viability of establishing a national health dentist within the town.
- Ensure that as the population ages the services they require remain locally based.
- Lobby hard to retain the Chestnut Walk residential home and encourage the development of similar centres.
- Establish an effective patient participation group encompassing all branches of healthcare.
- Ensure facilities and organisations are available to encourage both young and old to take regular exercise.
- Investigate the possibility of imposing a smoking ban in premises ahead of any national initiative.
- Retain existing specialised health services currently provided in the health centre i.e. podiatry, physiotherapy and speech therapy.
- Ensure that transport to and from local hospitals remains freely available and recruit more volunteer drivers.
- Ensure that there is always a chemist in the town.
- Halt the recent decline in the level of maternity care provision and seek to improve it as a matter of urgency.
- Ensure that the services on offer are fully publicised and that people are aware of what is available.