



Neighbourhood Health Centres: Building the Future of Care – Together

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Why Neighbourhood Health Matters

The NHS is undergoing a profound transformation. At its heart is a simple but powerful idea: care should be closer to home, integrated, and accessible. This is the essence of Neighbourhood Health, a strategic shift led by NHS England to reduce hospital dependency, improve outcomes, and deliver services in community settings.

With regards to the estate; the ambition is bold: to develop 250–300 Neighbourhood Health Centres (NHCs) over the next decade. These centres will be modern, multi-purpose hubs, open 12 hours a day, six days a week, staffed by multidisciplinary teams, and designed to embed the ‘Home First’ principle at the heart of our system.

But ambition alone isn’t enough. To make this vision real, we need clarity on what matters most. This is not new territory for us. As part of the LIFT programme, gbpartnerships has already developed 80+ Neighbourhood Health Centres across England over the past two decades.

That experience gives us deep insight into what works and what doesn’t when creating spaces that truly serve communities.

At the Healthcare Estates 2025 conference, one question dominated for us: What truly matters when creating health centres that bring care closer to home? The answers surprised us and they’re shaping the next decade of healthcare infrastructure.

We invited visitors to our stand to join a live discussion on the topic “Neighbourhood Health Centres – What Matters The Most?”





Creating an interactive activity, participants ranked priorities from a suggested list though were welcome to contribute their own. Throughout the two days, we updated our priorities board, sparking debate and collaboration. By the end of the event, we had a clear picture of what people seemed to value most and how closely this aligns with NHS guidance and real-world case studies.

The top five priorities – decided by you

Five priorities consistently stood out as the most critical for shaping Neighbourhood Health Centres. Here's what rose to the top and how gbp is already delivering on them.

1 Location and Access

Participants agreed that location decisions should be informed by population health data and local transport networks. Location is the foundation of accessibility.

Centres must be strategically placed within communities to ensure patients can reach services easily, whether by walking, public transport, or car.

gbp example: Healthy Living Centre for Chatham – Designed with strong community integration and transport connectivity.



Healthy Living Centre, Chatham



2

Service co-location



Attendees highlighted co-location as a driver for collaboration and efficiency but they are not synonymous.

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Bringing multiple services under one roof improves patient experience and reduces duplication. From diagnostics to social care, integration is key to holistic care.

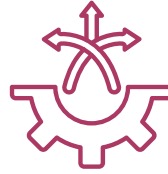
gbp example: Finchley Memorial Hospital Community Diagnostic Centre – A prime example of integrated services improving patient access.



Finchley Memorial Hospital CDC

3

Flexible spaces



Modular design and adaptable layouts were seen as essential to futureproofing. Healthcare evolves.

Spaces must adapt to changing needs whether that's new diagnostic equipment, expanded services, or different workforce models.

gbp example: Outline Business Case for Weybridge Health Campus – Incorporates flexible design principles for future service expansion.



Weybridge Health Campus

4

Extended opening hours



Delegates stressed that longer opening hours require workforce planning and digital support for remote consultations.

Access isn't just about location it's about time. Extended hours make care more convenient for working families and reduce pressure on urgent care and A&E.

gbp example: Wood Green Community Diagnostic Centre – Designed to support extended service availability.



Wood Green CDC

5

Transport and parking



Transport planning must consider local demographics, public transport availability, and sustainability goals.

Even the best-located centre fails if patients can't get there easily. Adequate parking and active travel options are critical for accessibility.

gbp example: Healthy Living Centre for Chatham – Integrated transport and parking solutions for community access.



Healthy Living Centre, Chatham

How did we create our shortlist?

Before the event, our team identified 25 potential priorities for Neighbourhood Health Centres, as follows.

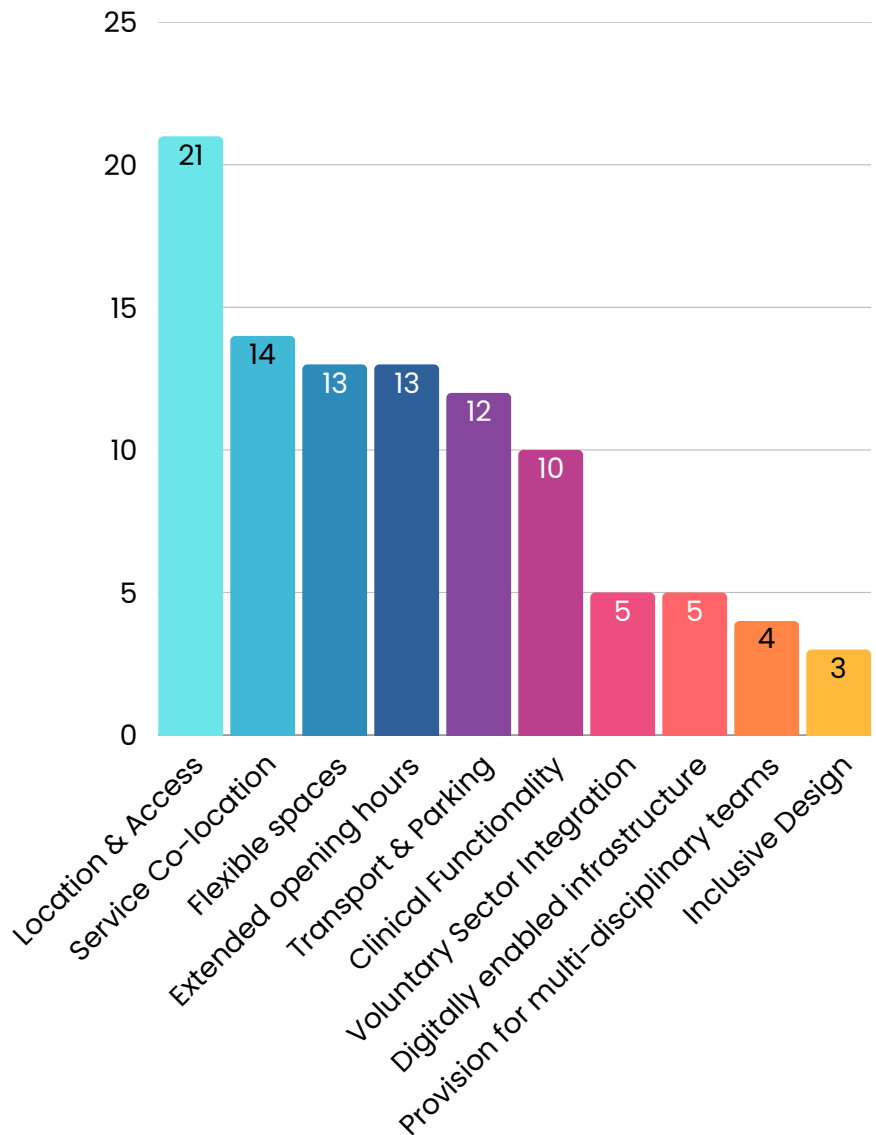
 Location & Access	Close to communities and easily accessible
 Transport & Parking	Adequate parking and active travel options
 Flexible spaces	That adapt easily to changing healthcare needs
 Inclusive design	Dementia-friendly, child-friendly, and accessible for people with disabilities.
 Sustainable & Low Carbon Design	Minimising environmental impact and supporting the NHS Net Zero agenda.
 Outdoor and Green Spaces	For relaxation, rehabilitation, and community engagement.
 Safety & Security	Robust measures to protect patients, staff, and assets.
 Future-proofing	Design that anticipates technological and clinical changes
 Extended opening hours	To improve patient access and convenience
 Digital infrastructure	High-speed connectivity and systems
 Provision of Telehealth and Online Consultations	Spaces and technology for virtual care delivery
 WiFi and Connectivity	Reliable, high-speed wireless connectivity is essential for modern healthcare delivery.

Neighbourhood health centre factors – continued.

	Service integration	Bringing together health, social care, mental health, and community services under one roof.
	Diagnostics, Pharmacy & Treatment Rooms	To reduce hospital dependency and improve access
	Urgent & Intermediate Care Services	Capacity to handle non-emergency urgent needs locally
	Mobile & Outreach Services	To reach underserved populations and improve access for people with disabilities.
	Provision of Multidisciplinary Neighbourhood Teams	Spaces for GPs, nurses, social workers, therapists etc to work collaboratively in the same facility.
	Community Involvement	Designing spaces that actively engage local communities.
	Cultural Sensitivity	Design and service delivery to accommodate diverse needs
	Health Equity	Ensuring fair access to services for all population groups
	Provision of Population Health Management	Supporting data-driven approaches to monitor, predict, and improve health outcomes
	Preventative Health Focus	Facilities and programmes for screening, lifestyle interventions, and early detection to improve long-term health outcomes
	Provision of Children's and Families Services	Including paediatric care, maternity support, and family health education
	Voluntary Sector Integration	Collaboration with charities, community groups, and voluntary organisations to enhance service reach and social support.
	Staff Wellbeing and Training	Spaces and programmes to support staff mental health, professional development, and continuous learning

Following an internal voting process based on our insights and experience, our team narrowed these down to a shortlist of 10 priorities to present to our IHEEM stand visitors.

After live voting at the conference, here's how the factors were finally ranked.



How gbp is driving change

Neighbourhood Health Centres are not just about the bricks and mortar – they represent a system-wide transformation. Delivering them requires strategic alignment, estate optimisation, and innovative funding models.

Here's how we are enabling this change:
Aligning Existing Estates with the Neighbourhood Health Model

We begin by asking a simple but powerful question: How can the current estate better enable neighbourhood health care?

To answer this, we have developed a checklist designed to evaluate existing health centres against the core principles of the Neighbourhood Health Care model. For those sites that are rated amber or red, we create tailored improvement plans to better align them with the neighbourhood health model.

This ensures that transformation isn't limited to new builds but starts with optimising what we already have.

Supporting the development of new Neighbourhood Health Centres

As the Government explores new public-private partnership models to unlock capital investment in NHS infrastructure, gbp is uniquely positioned to:

- **Shape the Blueprint** – We work with health systems to interpret national guidance and apply it locally.
- **Deliver new NHCs** – From diagnostics and rehabilitation to urgent care and social services, we design centres that truly integrate care.
- **Future-proof design** – Incorporating flexibility, sustainability, and digital readiness from day one based on our previous experience.

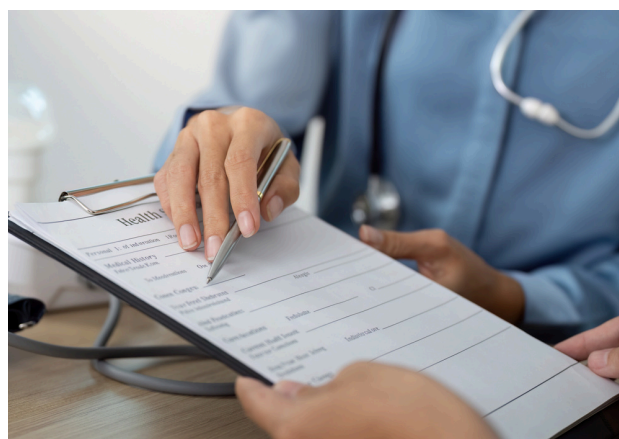
Our role goes beyond project delivery. We act as a strategic enabler, helping health systems to:

- Align estates with population health needs.
- Unlock funding streams through innovative partnership models.
- Ensure every investment supports long-term system priorities.

Summary

Neighbourhood Health isn't just about buildings – it's about creating spaces that bring care closer to home and make it better for everyone. The conversations at IHEEM made one thing clear: the appetite for change is real. Now, it's time to turn that energy into action.

Browse the case studies on our website to see how gbp is transforming priorities into reality, and get in touch to discuss how we can help you deliver the next generation of Neighbourhood Health Centres.



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