

The 70th birthday of the NHS narrative

Single line narrative

The NHS is turning 70 on 5 July 2018. It's the perfect opportunity to celebrate the achievements of one of the nation's most loved institutions, to look at the wide array of opportunities being created by advances in science, technology and information, and to thank the extraordinary NHS staff – the everyday heroes – who are always there to greet, advise and care for us.

Three line narrative

The NHS is turning 70 on 5 July 2018. It's the perfect opportunity to celebrate the achievements of one of the nation's most loved institutions, to appreciate the vital role the service plays in our lives, and to recognise and thank the extraordinary NHS staff – the everyday heroes – who are always there to greet, advise, and care for us. We will look at the radical thinking that led to the creation of the NHS, the breakthroughs which have transformed our health and wellbeing and how the service is evolving to meet our future needs, including the wide array of opportunities being created by advances in science, technology and information.

We can all play a role in supporting the NHS in this special birthday year, by volunteering, raising money for a local NHS charity, or by taking steps to look after our own health and using services wisely.

Longer narrative

The NHS is turning 70 on 5 July 2018. It's the perfect opportunity to celebrate the achievements of one of the nation's most loved institutions, to talk about the wide array of opportunities being created by advances in science, technology and information, and to thank the extraordinary NHS staff – the everyday heroes – who are always there to greet, advise, and care for us.

Over the last 70 years, the NHS has transformed the health and wellbeing of the nation and become the envy of the world. We will look at the radical thinking that led to the creation of the NHS and its founding principle of free high quality health care for all, how it's evolved to meet our changing needs and the innovations we can look forward to over the next 70 years.

We are all proud of our NHS. It has delivered huge medical advances and improvements to public health, meaning we can all expect to live longer lives. It is thanks to the NHS that we have all but eradicated diseases such as polio and diphtheria, and pioneered new treatments like the world's first liver, heart and lung transplant. The NHS continues to drive innovations in patient care, including mechanical thrombectomy to improve stroke survival, bionic eyes to restore sight, and surgical breakthroughs such as hand transplants. Looking to the future, the NHS is becoming more integrated and investing in new medicines, genetic research and digital technologies like apps and artificial intelligence, which will ensure we continue to live longer and healthier lives.

None of this would be possible without the skill, dedication and compassion of NHS staff, as well as the many volunteers, charities and communities that support the service. The NHS is the UK's largest employer, with over 1.5 million staff from all over the world and more than 350 different careers. We'll be telling these everyday heroes' stories throughout the celebrations: the midwives who deliver us into the world, the GPs and pharmacists who advise and treat us, the nurses, doctors and other clinicians who come to our aid when the unexpected happens, the porters who keep our hospitals moving, the support staff that make appointments happen, the researchers at the forefront of innovation, and so many others.

The history of the NHS is one of evolution, of responding to the changing needs of the nation. Today's NHS is rising to the challenge of a growing and ageing population, which means pressures on the service are greater than they have ever been. The population of England alone has soared by around 17 million people since the NHS was launched all those years ago, so far more patients now receive life-saving, life-changing care than ever before - and public satisfaction is higher than ten or twenty years ago. As the NHS turns 70, we will be talking about plans to address these pressures and make sure the NHS is fit for the future. This means, as a priority, making it easier to access your local GP, focusing hard on improving cancer diagnosis and swift treatment, and making sure that mental health services and urgent and emergency care are available whenever they're needed.

Our celebrations will also look further into the future, at the exciting possibilities being created by advances in science, technology and information. Innovations such as precision medicine, artificial intelligence, genomes research and the way we use NHS services will transform healthcare as we know it. This is a future where healthcare is based around early detection and preventative care, where patients can access expert advice on demand, treatments could be tailored to an individual's DNA or surgeries be carried out virtually from remote locations.

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The NHS's 70th birthday celebrations will start from January 2018 and peak on 5 July.

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