



Glossary of Terms



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Note: This glossary is included to assist readers who may be unfamiliar with some of the words or terms used in this document. Not all definitions of terms are included in the glossary. For further information contact the Directorate of Public Health, Devon Primary Care Trust, Commissioning Headquarters, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QL.

Acute Services – health services normally provided by a general hospital.

Acute Care – short-term care provided at the onset of illness.

Agency – any organisation, statutory or private, which provides services in the community.

AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a term that is used to describe the latter stages of HIV, when the immune system has stopped working and the person develops a life-threatening condition, such as pneumonia (infection of the lungs).

Assessment – the process of defining needs and determining the eligibility for assistance. It is a continuing process which should involve the service user, carers, and all organisations involved in the provision of care for that person.

Average Annual Years of Life Lost – this measure allows for the different age structure of the population considered (in this case Devon) compared with the European Standard Population (an internationally used population distribution for the whole of Europe). The measure estimates the average annual years of life lost before age 75 by the resident population aged under 75. It is expressed as a rate per 10,000 population under 75.

Carer – any person looking after a relative or friend, who, because of disability, illness or the effects of old age, cannot manage at home without help.

Care Management – a process that involves identifying a person's needs, drawing up a care plan and arranging provision of the services required. Services may be purchased from social services, health or the independent (private and voluntary) sector.

Care Pathway – the approach taken to the management of a particular disease or health problem that results in a service which is of a consistent standard and is evidence based.

Challenging Behaviour – behaviour of such intensity, frequency, or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be at risk, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or deny access to and use of ordinary community facilities.

CHD – coronary heart disease.

Commissioning – the means by which the statutory agencies plan, organise and purchase services for people.

Community Care – a way of providing services to people to help them to stay in their own homes for as long as they are able, or in other homely settings in the community.

Community Health Services – health services provided for people living in the community (as opposed to hospital care).

Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) – the specialist team working in the community giving mental health care to those not in hospital.

Confidence Interval – these define a range of values within which the true value is likely to lie. In the case of Standardised Mortality Ratios (SMR) for example, confidence intervals are used to compare the local rates with the national average to highlight if there are any statistically significant differences.



Continuing Care – an extended period of NHS funded health care that is usually arranged by teams led by specialist consultants. Continuing health care is for people with chronic or disabling illness who meet agreed local criteria and may be provided in hospitals, hospices, nursing homes or in patients' own homes.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) – a disease of adults characterised by airflow obstruction that is not fully reversible. The disease is particularly common in those aged over 45 with a history of smoking or inhalation of air-borne pollution.

Critical Care Services – intensive or high dependency clinical care in hospital.

DAAT – Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) is a strategic body that aims to break the harm done to society by the problematic use of drugs and alcohol. The DAAT commissions services, and works with partner agencies, to meet the targets and priorities set by the Government.

Direct Age-Standardised Rate (DASR) - the directly age-standardised rate is the rate of events that would occur in a standard population if that population were to experience the age-specific rates of the subject population. This allows for meaningful comparison between areas with different age structures, allowing geographies to be directly compared with other areas locally, regionally and nationally. Directly age-standardised rates are typically represented as rates per 100,000 population.

Domiciliary Care – help and services provided in a person's own home to improve their quality of life and enable them to maintain their independence. This can include home care, meals on wheels and visits by an occupational therapist, social worker or district nurse.

Electoral Ward – a sub-division of a local authority drawn up for electoral purposes. As of 31st December 2004 the geographical area covered by Devon Primary Care Trust was divided into 201 Wards. Wards vary considerably in population size which limits their use as standard comparable areas.

Health Promotion – the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health.

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a sexually transmitted virus that attacks the body's immune system, which provides a natural defence system against disease and infection. This leaves a person who is infected with HIV with a high risk of developing a serious infection, or disease, such as cancer.

Independent Sector – a range of non-statutory organisations involved in service provision, including both private and voluntary/charitable organisations.

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - 'The Indices of Deprivation' is a Deprivation index at Lower Super Output Area level (see Super Output Areas), created by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The Indices are based on the idea of distinct dimensions of deprivation which can be recognised and measured separately. These are then combined into a single overall measure, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The Index is made up of seven distinct dimensions of deprivation called domains covering income, employment, health, education, barriers to housing and services, crime and living environment.

Joint Commissioning – where more than one statutory agency joins together to commission or purchase new or existing services.

Joint Funding – a funding arrangement that includes two or more funders.

Local Area Agreement (LAA) – sets out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area (the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership) and other partners at the local level.

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Local Learning Community – these have been established as a group of schools that can work together to improve outcomes for children through collaborative working and support. Generally they are a group of primary schools that feed into one secondary school, including the secondary school, any special schools, and the local children's centre.

Morbidity Rate – the number of people who have a specific disease or condition over a given time period and which is usually expressed as a rate per 1,000 population.

Mortality Rate – the number of people who die in a given population over a given period of time, which is usually expressed as a rate per 1,000 population.

Multi-disciplinary – the involvement of people from different agencies or professions, combining their specialist skills and knowledge, to work towards a common goal.

NICE - The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health.

P Value – when making comparisons between two or more values (for example the percentage of people smoking now compared to five years ago), it is useful to have an indication of whether the difference between them could be a chance finding or is likely to represent a genuine difference. The P value provides such an indication and represents the probability of observing the difference obtained in our sample if there was, in reality, no difference in the population. The smaller the P value, the more likely it is that there is a real difference.

Practice Based Commissioning – is one method by which GPs and other front line clinicians can identify specific health needs within their communities and design services to address these needs.

Primary Care – care provided through the traditional family practitioner services, i.e. general practice services, pharmacists, optometrists and dentists.

Primary Health Care Team – includes the general practitioner, district nurse, health visitor, practice nurse and others who work from or in a GP practice or health centre.

Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) – is the annual reward and incentive programme detailing GP practice achievement results.

Rehabilitation – help for a person who has a disability or loss of function to aid their recovery and achieve maximum potential.

Respite Care – a service provided to someone for a short period of time in a setting away from their home, to give them and/or their carers a break.

Routine and Manual Workers – the term 'manual workers' refers to people who perform mainly physical work, especially in a factory or outdoors, while the term 'routine workers' is used to describe less skilled work typically governed by basic employment contracts and limited opportunities for promotion. The collective term 'routine and manual workers' cover a diverse range of activities and settings including electricians, fitters, plumbers, bar staff, catering assistants, cleaners, farm labourers, porters, postal workers, factory workers and truck drivers.

Secondary Care – care and treatment provided within a hospital setting.

Sensory Impairment – a loss or absence of ability to see or hear. The term does not necessarily signify complete loss.



Socio-economic Group - a classification aimed at bringing together people with similar social and economic status into a common group. These groups typically relate to occupation and employment status, as defined by classification systems such as the National Statistics Socio-economic classification (NS-SEC), which includes 17 categories and 40 sub-categories.

Special Needs Housing – (also referred to as supported housing) describes homes for those who require additional care, support and shared housing. These range from self-contained homes with visiting care staff, to residential homes where care is part of the tenancy agreement.

Standard Mortality Rate (SMR) – an index of mortality that enables comparisons to be made between populations, allowing for age and sex differences. For example, the mortality in a local government area can be compared with the region or with England and Wales. A SMR of 100 is the average in England and Wales. Values below 100 are better than average. The SMR is the ratio of observed or expected deaths multiplied by 100. Expected deaths are derived by applying the five-year average age specific death rates for England and Wales to corresponding age-specific resident populations.

Standardised Registration Ratio (SRR) – the SRR, like the SMR, is a standardised ratio. Comparisons can be made for cancer registrations, i.e. morbidity, allowing for differences in the age and sex structure of different populations. The SRR is a ratio of observed and expected registrations, the method being similar to the SMR.

Statutory Sector Organisations – local authorities, health authorities, NHS Trusts, district councils, central Government and similar bodies created by statute law.

Super Output Areas (SOAs) - were created by the Office for National Statistics as aggregations of census geographies and are used for the release of small area statistics. They have the advantage that they are not generally subject to boundary change, and that within each layer of the hierarchy, the SOAs are reasonably consistent in terms of size of population. There are two layers of SOA: Lower and Middle. Lower Layer SOAs are subdivisions of Middle Layer SOAs, which in turn are subdivisions of local authorities. Lower Layer SOAs have an average population of 1,500 and total 34,378 areas in England and Wales. Middle Layer SOAs have an average population of 7,200 and total 7,193 areas in England and Wales.

User Group – the phrase used in this document to describe support groups made up of people with a range of disabilities which are self-supporting or facilitated by a voluntary organisation. The term may be used in other contexts to refer to client or care groups in general.

Voluntary Sector – a range of non-statutory organisations which include self-help groups, consumer forums, umbrella organisations, users' and carers' groups and lobbying groups as well as organisations providing services for certain groups of people. Voluntary sector organisations may employ volunteers, paid staff or both and are usually controlled by an unpaid management committee or trustees. Funding may be received from a variety of sources including grants, donations, fundraising, legacies and sponsorship.

