



News Release

U-turn on health inspections proposal

East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) has claimed victory over a Government u-turn on plans to curb public and patient inspection of health services.

The Department of Health had proposed replacing patient and public involvement (PPI) forums with local involvement networks, known as LINKs, which would not have the right to inspect hospitals and other NHS institutions.

But since setting out the proposal in the consultation paper "A Stronger Local Voice" last July, ministers have been met with opposition to the plan to restrict inspection rights.

The Department of Health has now outlined new plans, in a summary document of more than 500 responses to the consultation, to "provide LINKs with the power to enter health and social care premises (with some exceptions) and to observe and assess the nature and quality of services".

HOSC was one of many organisations that opposed the plan.

Chairman Cllr Bob Lacey said: "This is a victory for all those people who knew that it was a bad idea to take away public and patient inspection of health services. We are pleased the Government has listened to the significant body of opposition to this plan. This can only be good news for the future of the NHS.

"PPI forums in East Sussex are run by committed and enthusiastic people who have built up considerable knowledge and expertise and East Sussex HOSC will continue to hold ministers to account over these proposals to change a system that works well."

PPI forums have only been in place for three years having replaced Community Health Councils after they were abolished in England in 2003.

The new LINK in East Sussex will cover the whole of the county, rather than specific organisations, and will include representatives from user groups, local voluntary and community sector organisations and interested individuals.

Ends

NOTE TO EDITORS:



The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is managed by East Sussex County Council and works in partnership with Eastbourne Borough Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council.

HOSC:

East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) was set up, in October 2003, by East Sussex County Council in response to Government aims to get people more involved in health decision-making and improving local health services. The committee includes members from every district and borough in the county - Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Rother and Wealden – and representatives from the voluntary sector.

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee last met on September 22.

For more information on HOSC see the website at www.eastsussexhealth.org

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