

## **PCT stands by decision**

At its Board meeting today, West Sussex Primary Care Trust (PCT) agreed to stand by its decision on the future model of healthcare for West Sussex – including plans to centralise three services (consultant led maternity, inpatient children's services and emergency surgery) at Worthing Hospital.

Following a four week period of external review and scrutiny, the Board agreed there was no basis on which its previous decisions on either the model of service or location of centralised services should be reviewed.

Three separate reports by external experts were presented to the PCT Board. The reports were commissioned to assure the Board members and the public that the decision on the model of care and the location of the major general hospital was the right decision and the process was robust.

One report reviewing the process as a whole concluded that the PCT had 'met nearly all the necessary requirements and in many cases exceeded those requirements'. Two areas identified for further action (outcome measures and provision of transport) are already being addressed. A second report by Dr Sheila Adam which looked at the importance of health inequality and deprivation supported the PCT's focus on health inequality and deprivation in its decision making process and confirmed that there is a greater concentration of deprivation in and around Worthing than in and around Chichester. However, she recognised that quantifying health inequalities was a complex task and suggests the Department of Health should develop methodologies to help PCTs going through future reconfigurations.

The third and final report analysed the seven criteria the PCT board used to decide on the location of centralised services. This report concluded that the PCT's process was compliant with good practice in all seven areas reviewed but recommends further strengthening of evidence on health inequalities and deprivation by creating a community strategy to address rural inequality, and further partnership working between the PCT and other NHS trusts to implement the changes.

John Wilderspin, Chief Executive said: "Throughout this consultation we have always sought expert advice to reassure ourselves and the public that our processes and our decisions are rigorous and robust and stand up to scrutiny. I am pleased the external experts have given our decision making processes a clean bill of health. What is important now is focusing further on the issues that matter most to the public such as addressing access in rural areas and ambulance response times. Changes to health services in West Sussex will be gradual and we want to reassure the public that the NHS is still open for business and nothing will happen overnight."

At the meeting today, the Board also endorsed the PCT's response to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) and South East Coast Strategic Health Authority (SHA).

10 July 2008

ENDS

For further information, please contact:

West Sussex PCT Communications

- Office 01903 707447
- E-mail at [media.enquiries@westsussexpct.nhs.uk](mailto:media.enquiries@westsussexpct.nhs.uk)

### **Editors' Notes:**

The reports are available to view at <http://www.westsussexpct.nhs.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information/meetings/board-meetings/july-10-2008/>

### **More information on the independent external reviewers**

**Tony Shaw OBE**, works as an independent consultant. He was previously CEO of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel – **reviewed the overall process**

**Dr Sheila Adam** is an experienced public health specialist. She was previously Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Director of Public Health for North East London SHA (2002-06) and North West Thames Regional Health Authority (1989-95) - **reviewed process to take account of impact of reconfiguration on health inequalities**

**Dr David Welbourne**, Health Partner at Knowledge Health Group. Previously he was a Director in the NHS for five years – **reviewed the process for deciding preferred location**

### **West Sussex Primary Care Trust**

West Sussex Primary Care Trust is a public body with a Board led by Chair Michael Harris and Chief Executive John Wilderspin. West Sussex PCT is responsible for the whole of West Sussex covering an area of 782 square miles. With a total population of 770,800\*, 94 GP practices and a budget of over £1 billion for 2007/2008 this makes it the fourth largest PCT in the country.

\* - The latest ONS Mid Year Estimate (2006 MYE) of population for West Sussex is 770,800 this is an increase of approximately 17,000 since the 2001 Census