

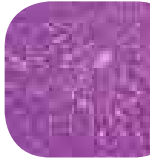


East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2005/2006

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East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2005/2006

This report summarises the progress of the East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). HOSC was set up in 2003 as a result of a central government initiative aiming to strengthen the involvement of public and patients in improving local health services. HOSC is made up of councillors from East Sussex County Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council and representatives from local voluntary organisations.

HOSC looks at the work of primary care trusts and National Health Service (NHS) trusts and the South East Coast Strategic Health Authority. It acts as a 'critical friend' by suggesting ways that health related services might be improved. It also looks at the way the health service interacts with social care and other council services to jointly provide better health services to meet the diverse needs of East Sussex residents and improve their well-being.

The NHS organisations are required to consult HOSC on any plans which would result in major changes to services. HOSC can scrutinise (carry out an independent check on) any local health services provided and commissioned through the NHS as well as those provided by local authorities.

This focus over the last 12 months has been on:

- The impact of Primary Care Trusts' reconfiguration in East Sussex.
- Plans for health services under the 'Fit for the Future' banner.
- Scrutiny of delayed transfers of care from the hospital trusts to intermediate and community care.
- Scrutiny of NHS dentistry in East Sussex.
- Scrutiny of services for mental health, learning disabilities and substance misuse following the formation of Sussex Partnership NHS Trust.
- Monitoring progress on the implementation of recommendations in the HOSC carers' review.
- Plans for health services under the 'Best Care, Best Place' banner affecting services provided in Brighton, Hove and Haywards Heath.
- Review of the treatment of long term conditions.
- Choose and Book. This initiative has not been very effective to date in East Sussex and HOSC has sought to uncover some of the key issues behind it.
- Services in rural areas e.g. community hospitals; transport and access.
- Strengthening partnerships with Patient and Public Involvement Forums and responding to consultation on the proposal for local involvement networks.



Introduction from the Chairman

I am enormously excited by the sterling progress of HOSC in this, its third year. This has, in no small part, been down to the efforts of my fellow committee members who have scrutinised a wealth of topics through the year. Members have been admirably supported throughout by a team of officers led by Paul Dean, Scrutiny Lead Officer.

Without doubt, consultation on health service changes, reconfigurations and NHS trust performance has dominated HOSC's work programme this year. The plans for health services under the 'Fit for the Future' and 'Best Care Best Place' banners have been particularly challenging.

HOSC has seen the establishment of the new South East Coast Strategic Health Authority, Sussex Partnership NHS Trust and South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Trust. Perhaps the biggest change has been the consolidation in the number of primary care trusts in East Sussex from four to two which came into effect on 1 October 2006.

Monitoring and reacting to these strategic developments have not halted HOSC's proactive work programme and it has successfully scrutinised a number of areas including delayed transfers of care, NHS dentistry, treatment of long term conditions and the Choose and Book system. Each project has resulted in a number of recommendations and actions.

This year we have strengthened the publicity on the work of HOSC. Our regular press releases attract wide coverage in the media while I have been interviewed a number of times on the radio about HOSC. Our quarterly HOSC meetings welcome members of the public and I was particularly encouraged to see over 70 people attend our special meeting in March 2006 on delayed transfers of care. Our latest initiative is to broadcast HOSC meetings live on the internet. The first broadcast was 30 November 2006 and attracted over 100 viewers. As public perception of HOSC increases, we have fielded an increasing number of concerns on the future of health services from members of the public.

HOSC sees itself as a valuable 'critical friend' to health organisations and it has forged a number of close working links with the NHS and increasingly with Adult Social Care. I am appreciative of the significant amount of co-operation from our health and social care colleagues and, in particular, their willingness to share information and ideas in such a frank and honest way.

HOSC works in tandem with the patient and public involvement forums (PPI Forums) and it has received invaluable contributions from their members on a number of topics of common concern.

This report summarises the committee's progress and achievements throughout the past year and looks forward to the next year. Undoubtedly, the degree of change within health organisations and the stringent financial environment in which they operate will provide a number of challenges for them. HOSC will continue to scrutinise developments and help ensure that residents receive the best possible healthcare.

Councillor Bob Lacey OBE
Chairman
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Health services reconfigurations

In the past year, HOSC has been involved in a number of consultations on health services reconfigurations.

The new **South East Coast Strategic Health Authority (SHA)** was established on 1 July 2006 following the merger of Kent & Medway and Surrey & Sussex Strategic Health Authorities.

A new primary care trust (PCT) structure came into effect from 1 October 2006. The eight new PCTs covering the South East Coast SHA are:

Surrey PCT

West Sussex Teaching PCT

Brighton and Hove City Teaching PCT

East Sussex Downs and Weald PCT

Hastings and Rother PCT

West Kent PCT

Eastern and Coastal Kent Teaching PCT

Medway PCT

Sussex Partnership NHS Trust is the new organisation providing NHS mental health, learning disability and substance misuse services for Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex. The trust came into being on 1 April 2006. It has taken over the relevant services formerly provided by South Downs Health NHS Trust in Brighton & Hove, and all the services formerly provided by East Sussex County Healthcare NHS Trust and West Sussex Health and Social Care NHS Trust (which have now been dissolved.)

On 1 July 2006 Kent, Surrey and Sussex Ambulances services merged to form the **South East Coast Ambulance Service.**



Fit for the Future

HOSC closely followed this extended consultation promoted by the East Sussex PCTs which centres on developing a sustainable strategy for improving health care across the region. The basics are:

Urgent and emergency care: keeping Accident & Emergency or hospital services for those in most need of these services and minimising hospital stays

Older people: providing more services at home and in community settings, especially those with long term conditions

Prioritising more local services for surgery and diagnostics

Improving health, reducing inequalities: working with other local services to improve health, life expectancy and overall well-being

Plans for health services, under the 'Fit for the Future' banner, were still being discussed at December 2006 and the critical decision on how each service will be provided lies with the PCTs. Nick Yeo, Chief Executive East Sussex PCTs, has assured HOSC that final decisions will take on board the views of all the stakeholders in the local health and social care economy and members of the public.

The key criteria the PCTs will use when drawing up specific proposals for consultation are:

- clinical standards and safety
- meeting patients needs
- accessibility
- best use of the finite set of resources.

HOSC will consider proposals carefully when they emerge and will demand sufficient time for full public consultation. Importantly, HOSC will wish to test the evidence behind the proposals.

HOSC will carefully monitor the extent to which the PCTs take on board public views, especially if it conflicts with the PCTs' preferred proposals.



Delayed transfers of care

Delayed transfers of care (DTC) occur where patients are ready to be discharged from hospital but the appropriate care arrangements are not in place to receive them. This can mean that hospital beds are occupied unnecessarily.

HOSC's investigation into the county's poor performance on DTCs began in earnest in March 2006 when it questioned Kim Hodgson, Chief Executive of East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust at a special meeting of HOSC. Kim clarified that East Sussex had had the worst performance in the country for at least the previous three years and that this was indicative of a systematic failure in the care of the residents of East Sussex.

Nearly 10% of East Sussex Hospitals bed stock was blocked with DTCs compared to a National performance of approximately 2%. This meant that, on average, 75 beds at the Trust were blocked by patients who did not need to be there. In the year to March 2006, 1,100 patients had been directly affected by these delays. The resultant lost bed days was equivalent to 2,800 patients being prevented from accessing a hospital bed.

HOSC questioned actions being taken by the trust to alleviate the problem. For East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust, these included reducing avoidable admissions and improving the discharge planning process. The primary care trusts and East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care, as key partners, played their part too. East Sussex County Council budgeted an £8.3 million investment in services in 2006/2007 and a further £2.1 million savings being made within the Adult Social Care Department were earmarked for front line services.

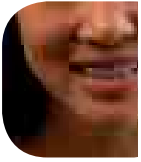
From an average 75 DTCs in March 2006, the target was to reduce the number to 20 by December 2006. By November 2006, the number had fallen to 40.

Recognising the multi-agency nature of the problem, HOSC instigated a wide-ranging evidence gathering project and, in September 2006, questioned Juliet Mellish, Director Whole System Improvement, East Sussex Downs and Weald PCT and Keith Hinkley, Director, Adult Social Care, East Sussex County Council.

Although numbers of DTCs have reduced in East Sussex, especially for those cases caused by Adult Social Care, HOSC is still concerned at the comparatively high level of cases.

The solution requires improving preventative services and thus reducing the number of people admitted to hospital. It means, wherever possible, people are treated at home or in the community. Initiatives include Emergency Care Practitioners who specialise in responding to people who have been injured in a home fall.

HOSC will continue to demand continued improvement in the critical areas.



NHS Dentistry

Following the launch of the Government's new NHS dental contract in April 2006, HOSC has been scrutinising the contract's impact.

In September 2006, HOSC concluded that the new dental contract had not helped NHS dentistry in East Sussex. The contract is designed to deliver more NHS services and greater clinical freedom for practices. However, HOSC remains concerned that many people in some parts of the county have no access to NHS dentists in their locality. Indeed, some of the most vulnerable people may not be receiving dental treatment at all. It appears, too, that many people do not know how to go about finding an NHS dentist.

HOSC questioned the PCTs in November 2006 following their review on the impact of the new dental contract. It noted that the PCTs and dentists are still embedding new contract changes but that generally there is a match between provision and need. The PCTs confirmed that a higher number of dentists are accepting NHS patients and that contract disputes have been reduced or resolved.

HOSC will continue to monitor the progress of the new dental contract and will receive regular updates from the PCTs. The PCTs will also report back on the completion of their urgent care provision review.



Shaping the future of mental health, learning disability and substance misuse services in Sussex

The Sussex Partnership NHS Trust covers East Sussex, Brighton & Hove and West Sussex. East Sussex HOSC retains an independent scrutiny of mental health and learning disability with issues being referred to neighbouring HOSCs only when a joint approach is required.

In September 2006, HOSC was briefed on changes in the way services for mental health, learning disabilities and substance misuse were organised. Lorraine Reid, Executive Director for East Sussex Locality, Sussex Partnership NHS Trust, outlined how the Trust is driving the trend to change traditional mental health services within the NHS and for other agencies to take up those roles.

The Trust and service commissioners are working together to reduce out-of-area treatment and to give service users greater choice in their treatment. It is recognised that more effective services can be offered when priorities are shared between the local authority and the Trust.

The drive towards treating people earlier aims to reduce the number of patients who develop acute conditions. This will mean more services will have to be available in the community and, ultimately, a likely reduction in the number of inpatient beds.

The aim, too, is to ensure that services are better able to meet the concurrent physical and mental health needs of patients.



Carers' review

Following the publication of the HOSC carers' review in April 2005, progress on its recommendations has been monitored. Highlights include:

- The GP carers' protocol is in place extensively across East Sussex.
- Adult Social Care now has a central contact centre. Carers' issues are incorporated in staff training and the number of completed carers' assessments is currently running at 200 per month compared to 100 per month a year ago.
- The Carers Passport was re-launched in November 2006. Carers can use the passport to share details of the patient's needs and preferences with hospital staff.
- A successful carers' grant and short break voucher scheme is in place.
- A Hospital Liaison Worker is in post to support carers who are in-patients.
- A new carers' information pack has been produced specially for carers supporting people with mental health problems.

These successes are tempered by some concerns:

- The Single Assessment Process appears to be still causing problems.
- Although 1,681 carers' assessments have been completed over the last 12 months, there are an estimated 50,000 carers in East Sussex.
- There are some concerns about the underlying primary care awareness of carers. However, PCTs are undertaking a lot of work to promote awareness of carers.

A young carers' review was completed by East Sussex County Council Children's Services in May 2006 and, in November, HOSC was enormously encouraged to see young carers' issues being addressed through implementation of recommendations in Children's Services review of young carers. Sandy Thomas, Policy Planning Manager, Disabled Children and John Tovey, Joint Head, Children's Services Commission Unit updated HOSC on progress in the young carers' development and improvement plan. Liz Fenton, Chief Executive, Care for the Carers supports the direction of travel set out in the plan and HOSC is continuing to monitor progress.

Initiatives include:

- The Common Assessment Framework to be introduced across Children's Services from April 2007 and into the Young Carers Service to help identify young carers.
- Setting up a Young Carers Strategy Group and this will include school representation.
- Hospitals adopting a new protocol which looks much more widely at a patient's needs including carer involvement.
- Awareness raising programme with GPs.

HOSC will continue to monitor the progress on recommendations from both reviews.



Best Care, Best Place

A Joint Committee was established to consider NHS proposals to make substantial changes to health services in the Brighton and central Sussex area. The consultation process ran from November 2004 until February 2005. The Joint Committee was made up of nine members, with three each from the Health Scrutiny Committees of East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove. Mr Ralph Chapman, Councillor Philip Howson and Councillor David Rogers are the East Sussex HOSC representatives.

The reconvened Committee met on 28 September 2006. It is investigating:

- Accident and Emergency waiting times and ambulance journey times, service modelling and protocols.
- Staffing numbers and any recruitment gaps in children's inpatient medical services at Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital in Brighton.
- The draft business case for the re-provision of the Hurstwood Park Neuroscience Unit at Princess Royal Hospital. The unit will not be progressed further until 'Fit for the Future' consultation has been issued. The delay is not having an impact on service.
- Update on transition to community and intermediate provision.
- Addressing transport provision. Some progress noted but more needs to be made.
- Audiology waiting times.

The committee raised concerns on the future sustainability of two-site provision of maternity services. It also had concerns on the effectiveness of Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust communications. The committee will meet again in February 2007 to consider reports on outstanding issues.



Review of the treatment of long term conditions

5% of NHS patients have long term conditions, for example diabetes, heart failure, respiratory disease, dementia, stroke, but utilise some 42% of NHS resources. HOSC recognised that there is scope to apply case management principles and support for self care to this group of patients.

A HOSC project board, comprising Councillor Eve Martin, Councillor Ruth O'Keeffe, Councillor David Rogers and Councillor John Wilson reviewed the treatment and services for people who live with a long term condition. It found that the Transforming Chronic Care Programme being undertaken by all PCTs across Surrey and Sussex appears comprehensive in its desire to improve care and reduce dependence on NHS resources.

HOSC's main recommendation was to ensure that the patient consultation groups adequately represented patients in East Sussex.

HOSC continues to maintain a watching brief on:

- information sharing and patient pathways for people with long term conditions
- related health inequality issues.



Choose and Book

Choose and Book is a new online system which gives patients a choice of where they are treated for elective care. HOSC has monitored the progress of the scheme from its launch in December 2005.

In a presentation to HOSC in November 2006, Terri Agnew, Choose and Book Programme Manager, East Sussex Area, confirmed that currently there were 600 referrals per week across East Sussex. This compared with 80/90 a week in September 2006. Hastings and Rother PCT is now in the top 5 performing PCTs in South East Coast SHA area. However, it was only in the previous two months that a full range of services had been able to be offered to GPs.

The Choose and Book team is liaising with GPs and trying to improve capacity as well as looking at demand management schemes. GPs find the system slow and it does not meet all their needs. For example, Choose and Book cannot be used to book appointments with named consultants. The best alternative is for GPs to direct patients to specific clinics where they know that a particular consultant will see the patient.

HOSC had highlighted several concerns in September 2006 and it was pleased to note the improvement in the performance of the Choose and Book system and that technical problems, particularly amongst Bexhill GPs, are being resolved. However, HOSC still has reservations about the system and will continue to receive regular updates.



Patient and Public Involvement Forums

HOSC continues to develop its relationships with East Sussex Patient and Public Involvement Forums (PPI Forums) recognising their distinct and complementary roles. Each HOSC member 'buddied' with a PPI Forum with the aim of strengthening the partnership. Relevant key issues are shared at the PPI Forum item on HOSC agendas. The HOSC's relationships have evolved to take account of the restructuring of PPI Forums to reflect the health services reconfigurations.

Sussex Downs and Weald PCT PPI Forum worked closely with HOSC on the NHS dentistry review. Sussex Partnership NHS Trust PPI Forum worked closely with HOSC on shaping the future of mental health, learning disability and substance misuse services in Sussex.

In July, however, the Department of Health issued a paper entitled 'A Stronger Local Voice', on its plans to replace PPI forums with local involvement networks, known as LINKs. These proposals were to see public and patient representatives lose their right to inspect hospitals and other NHS institutions.

However, the Department of Health responded to intense lobby by HOSCs and Patient and Public Forums and will now ensure that LINKs have the right to inspect hospitals and other NHS institutions. LINKs will retain the statutory powers held by PPI Forums. The right to inspect premises will be a key to LINKs effectiveness.



Reference Group

Members of the HOSC Reference Group have contributed advice, analysis and comment to individual HOSC projects throughout the year. The group comprises people who have worked in the NHS or associated services and now have recent and relevant experience, but do not have a conflict of interest.



Peer Review

The County Council invited the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) to carry out a Corporate Peer Review in September. The Review Team (made up of officers and elected members from other local authorities) interviewed members, County Council staff, representatives from partner organisations, including the trade unions, and residents. The authority felt that it would be useful to get an independent view of the Council's overall performance before the Council's next formal Corporate Assessment and Joint Area Review by the Audit Commission and OFSTED which will take place in June 2007.

The Review Team's report was published in December 2006. The Review Team's findings were very positive about scrutiny in East Sussex and some areas for development were highlighted. In particular, scrutiny was encouraged to provide greater involvement of the public in its work. HOSC will be responding enthusiastically to the review's recommendations.



Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2006/2007

East Sussex County Council



Councillor Bob Lacey OBE
Chairman



Councillor David Rogers OBE
Vice Chairman



Councillor Beryl Healy



Councillor Philip Howson



Councillor Carl Maynard



Councillor Ruth O'Keeffe



Councillor John Wilson

Eastbourne Borough Council



Councillor Anne Angel

Hastings Borough Council



Councillor Eve Martin

Lewes District Council



Councillor Ralph Taylor

Rother District Council



Councillor Christopher Starnes

Wealden District Council



Councillor Diane Phillips

Voluntary services' representatives



Mr Ralph Chapman
Chairman
Age Concern East Sussex



Mrs Rosemary Iddenden
Branch Manager
Alzheimer's Society

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Officers

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Paul Dean, Scrutiny Manager
Claire Lee, Scrutiny Lead Officer
Fiona Allan, Committee Manager
Richard Partridge, Legal Adviser
Sam White, Scrutiny Support Officer

Eastbourne Borough Council

Neil Fuller, Director of Housing, Health & Community Services

Hastings Borough Council

Katrina Strong, Scrutiny Officer

Lewes District Council

Ian Kedge, Head of Environment and Health

Rother District Council

Brenda Mason, Head of Policy and Performance

Wealden District Council

Jeremy Leach, Public Health Development Manager



Personnel changes

In June 2006, Councillor Anne Angel succeeded Councillor Colin Belsey as Eastbourne Borough Council's HOSC representative. This followed Cllr Belsey's appointment as Mayor of Eastbourne.



Finance

Total expenditure on East Sussex HOSC activities in 2005/2006 was £65,700 funded from:

East Sussex County Council	(7 seats)	£38,325
Eastbourne Borough Council	(1 seat)	£ 5,475
Hastings Borough Council	(1 seat)	£ 5,475
Lewes District Council	(1 seat)	£ 5,475
Rother District Council	(1 seat)	£ 5,475
Wealden District Council	(1 seat)	£ 5,475
Total		£65,700



Expenditure

Scrutiny reviews project management and support (East Sussex County Council officers)	£16,214
Officer support to HOSC	£13,720
External project management	£ 2,000
Officer support to member scrutiny activities	£ 8,700
Website maintenance/communications including newsletters and annual report	£ 7,808
Programme development and liaison with key partners in Health, Adult Social Care, Patient and Public Involvement Forums, voluntary organisations etc	£ 8,033
Legal advice and administrative support to HOSC and HOSC officers	£ 4,125
HOSC meeting room hire, travel expenses and refreshments	£ 2,100
Stationery and photocopying	£ 1,250
HOSC member training and away day seminar	£ 1,750
Total	£65,700

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