



East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2008/09

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East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report April 2008 – March 2009

This report summarises the progress of the East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). 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 the local voluntary sector and East Sussex Local Involvement Network (LINK). The committee's aim is to contribute to improving health and wellbeing for the people of East Sussex. The committee looks at the work of National Health Service (NHS) organisations and 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 the County Council's social care services, the voluntary sector, independent providers and other council services to jointly provide better health services to meet the diverse needs of East Sussex residents.

NHS Organisations in East Sussex

Commissioners of health services:

NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald (Previously East Sussex Downs and Weald Primary Care Trust)

NHS Hastings and Rother (Previously Hastings and Rother Primary Care Trust)

These organisations plan and buy health services for East Sussex. They also oversee GPs, dentists, opticians and community staff like district nurses and health visitors.

Mental health, learning disability and substance misuse services:

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Ambulance services:

South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Trust

Hospital services:

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust

East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust

The NHS is 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.

HOSC celebrated its fifth birthday in October 2008. The committee was set up as a result of the central government initiative aiming to strengthen the involvement of public and patients in improving local health services.



The highlights of HOSC's year:

Developing maternity services for East Sussex

Reviewing the proposals for maternity services continued to dominate HOSC's activities. Following the Secretary of State for Health's rejection of proposals to offer doctor-led childbirth services from a single site in East Sussex, HOSC has been monitoring NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother's formulation of a new strategy for maternity and related services.

Stroke services review

This major review scrutinised three areas: prevention and awareness of stroke; provision of acute care for East Sussex residents; and, rehabilitation and long-term support for stroke survivors and carers. The review resulted in 20 recommendations directed at a range of organisations, designed to improve services and to improve stroke awareness.

Health centres in Eastbourne and Hastings

HOSC has been monitoring the development of GP-led health centres in Eastbourne and Hastings and endorses the plans. The Eastbourne centre at the town's railway station is due to open in September 2009. The Hastings centre in the Hastings Station Plaza development is scheduled to open in June 2010.

Mental health services

Acute assessment services for older people with dementia

HOSC completed a short review and supports the aim of Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to reduce in-patient beds and reduce acute assessment units to two from three, enabling a shift in investment towards community based assessment and support. Promoting health and wellbeing by providing more care, closer to home is one of the key themes for older people's mental health services.

Psychological therapy services

HOSC welcomed the news that £3 million over three years will be invested in psychological therapy services. 50 new workers will be appointed. The service will be based in the primary care setting and will focus on treating conditions such as anxiety and depression through cognitive behavioural therapy.

Day and vocational mental health services for adults

Day services have a vital role within mental health service provision and HOSC scrutinised plans for the new model for day and vocational services. The model is designed to modernise the services to ensure they promote social inclusion, recovery and represent good value for money. HOSC welcomed the development. The new contracts start in July 2009.

Foundation Trusts

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

In August, HOSC was pleased to learn of the successful application by Sussex Partnership NHS Trust to become a NHS Foundation Trust. HOSC had previously commented on the Trust's proposed governance arrangements. At the same time the Trust was also awarded teaching status through its links with the Brighton and Sussex Medical School.

East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust

East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust plans to submit its application for Foundation Trust status to the South East Coast Strategic Health Authority in July 2009. HOSC responded positively to the Trust's consultation on its proposed governance and strategy.

NHS Dentistry

HOSC has monitored NHS dentistry services since 2006 when it highlighted the lack of NHS dentists in certain parts of the country. Work has continued to ensure gaps are being addressed.

Cervical cancer schools vaccination programme

HOSC has been briefed on how the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine for cervical cancer is being introduced in the county's schools and the committee will review the first year's implementation in November 2009.

Choice and Booking

Choice and Booking has been on the HOSC agenda since the system's launch in March 2005. It is a national programme that combines electronic booking with a choice of place, date and time for first outpatient appointments. A number of problems with Choice and Booking have hindered its full and effective implementation. Only 20% to 35% of East Sussex GP referrals are being handled through the system compared to a national target of 90%. HOSC continues to keep an eye on developments and the work by health bodies to improve the uptake.

East Sussex Local Involvement Network (LINK)

East Sussex Local Involvement Network (LINK) was established in April 2008 to help communities influence the way health and social care services are delivered. The LINK works in partnership with HOSC and Janet Colvert, Chair of the LINK Core Group, is the LINK representative who sits on HOSC.

West Sussex 'Fit for the Future' plans

The NHS West Sussex and NHS Brighton and Hove 'Fit for the Future' plans are on hold pending the outcome of the proposals for a merger between Worthing and Southlands NHS Trust and Royal West Sussex NHS Trust. East Sussex HOSC members have fully participated in the Joint HOSC charged with scrutinising the proposals.



Introduction from the Chairman

I am pleased to report another successful year for HOSC during which it celebrated its fifth anniversary. I feel that the committee has consolidated its position as a watchdog which is holding health bodies to account on behalf of local communities. I would like to thank my fellow committee members and HOSC officers for all their hard work over the year. I would also like to thank the many individuals who responded to HOSC's requests to contribute to the reviews and attend the committee's meetings.

Reviewing plans for maternity services continued to dominate our work programme. Whilst we felt vindicated when the Secretary of State for Health rejected the single site proposals, it is very encouraging to see how the health bodies have responded to this decision and are working in partnership to ensure that a new strategy for maternity services is put in place.

The stroke care review was another major project delivered this year. I am impressed with the strength of the review's recommendations and we look forward to seeing their full implementation.

These large scale projects have been dovetailed with a range of smaller scale scrutiny activities including NHS Dentistry, Choice and Booking, and responding to new developments e.g. in older people's mental health services.

In every case, what HOSC tries to do is get to the nub of the issue, consider the evidence and draw conclusions before making recommendations designed to improve a service.

During the year, HOSC has seen a number of personnel changes. Professor Peter Cox, Patient and Public Involvement Forums' representative stood down from HOSC in March 2008 and Debby Matthews, Director, South Downs Council for Voluntary Services stood down in November 2008. I would like to thank them for their contributions during their membership of HOSC.

Janet Colvert, Chair of the Local Involvement Network Core Group succeeded Professor Cox and her skills and experience have already been invaluable to the committee.

I thoroughly enjoy my HOSC role and I am convinced that the committee is making a real difference in helping to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.

Councillor Sylvia Tidy
Chairman,
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Membership March 2009

East Sussex County Council

Councillor Sylvia Tidy

Chairman

Councillor David Rogers OBE

Vice Chairman

Councillor Beryl Healy

Councillor Philip Howson

Councillor Ruth O’Keeffe

Councillor Barry Taylor

Councillor John Wilson

Eastbourne Borough Council

Councillor Alex Hough

Hastings Borough Council

Councillor Eve Martin

Lewes District Council

Councillor Carolyn Lambert

Rother District Council

Councillor Angharad Davies

Wealden District Council

Councillor Diane Phillips

Voluntary services’ representatives:

Mr Ralph Chapman, Chairman, Age Concern East Sussex

(Vacancy – to be nominated by Speak Up Forum)

East Sussex Local Involvement Network (LINK) representative:

Janet Colvert, Chair, East Sussex LINK Core Group



Developing maternity services for East Sussex

Reviewing the plans for maternity services continued to dominate HOSC's activities, particularly in the first half of the year. After analysing all the evidence, HOSC remained unconvinced by NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother's case for a single site for obstetrics, special baby care and in-patient gynaecology services in Hastings and a midwife-led-unit in Eastbourne. The committee had spent seven months gathering evidence from a wide range of people before arriving at the decision to refer the proposals to the Secretary of State for Health, Alan Johnson. He then passed the referral to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) for advice on these contested proposals. The IRP carried out a full review to investigate the concerns raised by HOSC.



'The mood of HOSC was very much that mothers-to-be deserve the very best in maternity services. The single site proposals prompted passionate debate and much opposition from community groups concerned about the impact on access to services. We wanted to check that the plans were safe for local people.'

'After reviewing all the evidence, the committee was confident that the IRP, as independent experts, would weigh up the pros and cons of the proposals and give informed advice to the Secretary of State as to how maternity services in Eastbourne and Hastings should be configured.'

Councillor Beryl Healy, East Sussex County Council (Eastbourne: Devonshire)

The IRP submitted its report to the Secretary of State for Health in the summer and, in September 2008, he announced the rejection of the single site proposals. NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother assured HOSC that they remained committed to working with stakeholders toward formulating a comprehensive strategy for maternity and related services. This strategy would hinge on maintaining consultant-led maternity units in Eastbourne and Hastings and would include improving antenatal and postnatal care, and associated outreach services.

A Maternity Services Development Panel was set up by NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother to bring together representatives from key organisations and interested parties. The group is looking at how to implement the IRP recommendations as well as the national government's broader 'Maternity Matters' agenda. The HOSC Chairman has attended the panel to observe progress.



'HOSC reckoned that the Secretary of State's response was a fantastic result for East Sussex. It confirmed the value of the committee in its role as a watchdog, holding health bodies to account on behalf of local communities.'

Councillor John Wilson, East Sussex County Council (Hastings: Ashdown and Conquest)

The revised strategy for maternity services in East Sussex has been welcomed by HOSC. The committee is particularly interested in the evolution of the 'Maternity Dashboard' which draws together a range of indicators such as maternity unit closures, staffing data and booking figures. The aim is for the dashboard to provide some effective performance indicators which can be used to identify and tackle quality issues.



'One aspect of the maternity services review which stood out was the importance of providing choice for mothers. It was pleasing to see that maintaining the midwife-led unit in Crowborough was seen as a given.'

Councillor Diane Phillips, Wealden District Council (Crowborough West)

Other plans revealed to HOSC include the introduction of geographical working for midwives with the aim of improving access for women. Women will have their first appointment with a midwife within 12 weeks of pregnancy. Significant changes include community bases for midwives. GP surgeries will allow non-registered patients to see a midwife at their practice if this is more convenient. Also, alternative clinic venues are being established e.g. Asda in Eastbourne and local Children's Centres.



'The committee is keeping a close eye on the development of maternity services. It's good to see many improvements in the pipeline and I do like the idea that mothers will be able to see midwives on a 'drop-in' basis. I would, though, prefer to see a faster pace of change overall.'

Councillor Carolyn Lambert, Lewes District Council (Seaford Central)

A pilot scheme called the Family Nurse Partnership is working with 100 young mothers in Hastings. The scheme is designed to improve the health, wellbeing and self-sufficiency of low-income first-time parents. Mothers stay in the programme until the child is two years old.



'I am so pleased to see the Family Nurse Partnership trialled in Hastings. The town has many young families who are likely to benefit from this initiative and it will be interesting for HOSC to see the results from the pilot. Hopefully, these will be positive and the scheme will be implemented in other parts of the county.'

Councillor Eve Martin, Hastings Borough Council (Conquest)

The development of maternity services remains an important fixture in HOSC's work programme and the committee receives regular updates and evidence from representatives of NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother. Maintaining two consultant-led maternity units in Eastbourne DGH and the Conquest Hospital is very much a reflection of people's need for locally accessible services. The priority for HOSC is to ensure local people continue to receive high standards of maternity care through a comprehensive strategy developed in partnership.



Stroke services review

With one of the oldest populations of any county in England, stroke care is a priority for East Sussex because:

- Stroke is the third largest cause of death in England and the single largest cause of adult disability.
- Most strokes occur in people over 65.
- Over 1,500 East Sussex residents were admitted to hospital after a stroke or mini stroke in 2006/7.
- Prevention and best practice care makes a huge difference, but more so if backed up by the right resources.

HOSC undertook this review to identify inequalities in provision and to investigate priorities for improvement. It was carried out alongside the development of a stroke strategy by NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother so that the two activities could inform each other. HOSC wanted to challenge the emerging strategy and add value by undertaking research which could inform it. The review concentrated on the views of patients and carers and front-line staff. It investigated three areas:

- Prevention and awareness of stroke
- Provision of acute care for East Sussex residents
- Rehabilitation and long-term support for stroke survivors and carers

As no robust research had ever been done into local people's awareness of stroke, a survey of 1,900 members of the public was carried out through the County Council's residents' panel. The survey achieved a response rate of 61% (1,159 people) and gave a clear picture of levels of understanding of stroke and how this could be improved.

'The most startling finding from the survey was that a quarter of respondents couldn't name any stroke symptoms – with potentially lethal implications. If people can't spot the signs of stroke, they won't know to call 999 and get immediate help.'

Councillor Eve Martin, Hastings Borough Council (Conquest) and member of the Stroke Care Review Board.

The review resulted in 20 recommendations directed at a range of organisations, designed to improve services and to improve awareness. NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother have agreed to co-ordinate the response to these through the local multi-agency Stroke Programme Board. HOSC will monitor and challenge progress and receive regular reports. A locally developed 'stroke dashboard' of clinical indicators will be used within this process.

The review has also contributed to awareness-raising activities and complemented the national stroke awareness campaign which is running advertisements on the use of the 'FAST' test to recognise the signs of a stroke.

- **F**acial weakness: Can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?
- **A**rm weakness: Can the person raise both arms?
- **S**peech problems: Can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?
- **T**ime to call 999: If a person fails any one of these tests, you must call 999. Stroke is a medical emergency and by calling 999 you can help someone receive the early treatment they need to improve their chances of recovery.



'I am confident that the review's recommendations, when fully implemented, will contribute to a reduction in stroke cases and better treatment of stroke. This will improve outcomes and quality of life for many patients and carers. Indeed, I hope it will actually save lives.'

Councillor Angharad Davies, Rother District Council (Crowhurst) and Chairman, Stroke Care Review Board



Health centres in Eastbourne and Hastings

HOSC has endorsed NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother's plans for the development of two new GP-led health centres to be located in Eastbourne and Hastings. The committee monitored developments through the year and contributed during the consultation phase of the 14 month procurement process. In March 2009, it was confirmed that South East Health had been awarded five year contracts to run both the centres. The total values of the contracts are approximately £6.47 and £6.53 million respectively. The developments are in response to the government's national commitment to establish at least 150 GP-led health-centres. These provide access to GP services on an 8am-8pm, 7 days a week basis for both registered and non-registered patients, and a walk-in service. The health centres are part of a wider programme of improving access to primary medical services which also includes extending existing GP practice opening hours.

The Eastbourne centre will be in the town's railway station complex and a planning application has been logged with Eastbourne Borough Council. The service is scheduled to be open in September 2009.

The Hastings centre will be on the ground floor of the new Hastings Station Plaza Primary Health Care Centre. South East Health will deliver the service in partnership with three local GPs. The service is scheduled to be open in June 2010. As well as the new health centre, Station Plaza will also provide accommodation for 5 local GP practices and offer a range of enhanced services including childhood immunisations, minor surgery, anti-coagulation monitoring, and sexual health services. A number of additional services will also be available, including cervical screening, maternity medical services, contraceptive services, vaccinations and immunisations. It is planned that Station Plaza Primary Health Care Centre will provide services for 20,000 patients per year.

In addition to Station Plaza, NHS Hastings and Rother has plans for a primary care centre in Upper St Leonards (Silverhill) by 2010 and in the Ore Valley by 2012. Consultation on these sites is underway.



'These centres are in areas of Hastings and Eastbourne which have a high level of deprivation and unemployment and so will be able to provide a range of primary and community services to a needy population as well as flexibility for those who travel to work. They will also provide access to services for the many tourists and students who visit East Sussex. I am extremely pleased to see these developments getting off the ground.'

Janet Colvert, Chair, Local Involvement Network (LINK) Core Group

HOSC is continuing to monitor the health centre development strategy and keeping a watchful eye on the effectiveness of the communication plans. The committee will receive a detailed update in June 2010.



Mental health services

Acute assessment services for older people with dementia

Promoting health and wellbeing by providing more care, closer to home is one of the key themes for older people's mental health services provided by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and its partners. This is in tandem with reducing the number of older people who go into hospital, offering more intensive care and providing more sheltered accommodation and extra care housing schemes.

The Trust aims to ensure older people with organic mental illness (age-related conditions like dementia) receive care in separate units from those with functional mental illness (conditions occurring at any age such as personality disorders or depression).

The Trust aims to reduce in-patient beds, in the county, from 74 to 60 and reduce acute assessment units to two, enabling a shift of investment towards community based support and assessment.

As part of this strategy, HOSC learned that the Trust planned to temporarily relocate acute assessment beds from Milton Court in Eastbourne to Beechwood Unit in Uckfield pending the development of a new site in Eastbourne. The second acute unit is in Hastings. HOSC undertook a short review to assess the impact of these plans on patients and carers and to consider the results of the Trust's consultation with stakeholders.

HOSC supported the proposals on the basis that they facilitate the redevelopment of Milton Court by Adult Social Care to provide improved facilities but wanted to ensure that a number of conditions were recognised by the Trust, including support for travel arrangements and the return of the beds to Eastbourne as soon as possible.



'This review was timely. With depression present in approximately 15% of all older people and dementia affecting 5% of all people over 65 years (rising to 20% for all people over 80 years) the pressure on resources is growing. This is particularly so in East Sussex where nearly 12% of the population is aged 75+ compared to 8% nationally. The county ranks highest of all counties for the percentage aged 85+ and aged 90+. At district level, Rother is ranked second highest of all 354 district and unitary authorities in the country for percentage aged 75+, aged 85+ and aged 90+. Eastbourne and Lewes are also in the top 10 districts for 85+ and 90+.'

Ralph Chapman, Chairman, Age Concern East Sussex

The review highlighted how important it will be to increase investment in community based services to support the bed reduction strategy. Respite care is an important part of older people’s mental health services and underpins the ability to offer community based care.

‘One important concern raised was that centralisation of beds means that in-patient assessment units will be located only in the coastal strip. HOSC will be making sure that the needs of rural areas are considered when further developing community based services.’


Councillor Beryl Healy, East Sussex County Council (Eastbourne: Devonshire)

HOSC will revisit the topic in September 2009 to assess the impact of the implementation of the proposals and see how plans for the permanent site for acute assessment beds in Eastbourne have progressed and how community based services are faring.

Improving psychological therapy services


In September, HOSC discussed local NHS plans for psychological therapy services. The committee learned that £3 million over three years will be invested to enable 50 new workers to be appointed. The service will be based in the primary care setting and will focus on treating conditions such as anxiety and depression through cognitive behavioural therapy.

The objective is to de-stigmatise the treatment of these conditions by encouraging GPs to refer people to a primary care mental health worker who would complete an assessment of needs. The therapy and tailored support e.g. via wellbeing centres, is designed to improve confidence and provide support thus enabling the person to return to work. The first tranche of staff started their training in September 2008 at Brighton University.

 *‘I was very pleased to learn of this investment. I favour this more holistic approach to treatment rather than the historical emphasis on treating symptoms. It’s encouraging, as well, that the funding comes with challenging targets. HOSC, of course, will monitor whether these targets are met.’*

Councillor Barry Taylor, East Sussex County Council, (Eastbourne: Meads)

People on a care pathway will be treated at the primary care level where possible, as this is less stigmatising, but if the condition worsens the patient will access specialist care.

 *‘It’s a sobering fact that 1 in 4 people will need help for a mental health condition during their lives. HOSC believes that it is important that the first ‘step’ of mental health care is widely available within primary care.’*

Councillor Alex Hough, Eastbourne Borough Council (Upperton)

Day and vocational mental health services for adults

Day services have a vital role within mental health service provision. They aim to provide meaningful daytime activities and to enable people to move onto greater independence, including mainstream employment and education. A review of mental health day and vocational services was completed in 2004 by commissioners (East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care, NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother). This

review showed the need to modernise services to ensure they promote social inclusion, recovery and represent good value for money. In 2006 a commissioning model for day and vocational services was put together in line with Department of Health guidance and with the involvement of service users. The commissioners appointed new providers through a tender process which ran between July and December 2008. The new contracts start on 1st July 2009, allowing for a six month transition period.

In March 2009, HOSC held a session to scrutinise how the new model would be implemented.

HOSC was impressed with the consultation process surrounding the new model. Service user representatives were members of the project steering group and also sat on the interview panel that chose the new providers. A reference group tested out aspects of the new model and any service user could feed into the reference group. These sorts of changes can create anxiety amongst service users and it was refreshing to see how sensitively the process was handled. It is hoped that many service users respond to the new emphasis on empowerment and are encouraged to try and experience more activities in the community.

Councillor Diane Phillips, Wealden District Council (Crowborough West)

HOSC welcomed the new service model but recognised that it represents a large cultural shift away from the previous 'one size fits all'. The new providers want individuals to feel that they are progressing with their lives but they appreciate that this can often be daunting for people with mental health problems. The committee will return to the topic in September 2010 to assess how the new approach is bedding in.



Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

In August, HOSC was pleased to learn of the successful application by Sussex Partnership NHS Trust to become an NHS Foundation Trust. This means the Trust is now more accountable to the people it serves, through its new Council of Governors and wider membership, than it has ever been before. At the same time the Trust was also awarded teaching status through its links with the Brighton and Sussex Medical School.

HOSC has developed a strong relationship with Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. As it embarks on a five-year strategy to develop its mental health, learning disability and substance misuse services, HOSC will continue to scrutinise how these services are working and that they best serve the interests of the people of East Sussex.'

Councillor Sylvia Tidy, Chairman HOSC, East Sussex County Council (Crowborough)



East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust

HOSC noted that East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust plans to submit its application for Foundation Trust status to the Strategic Health Authority in July 2009. They will assess the Trust's readiness for Foundation Trust status and will then submit the application to the Secretary of State.

The next stage of the application process will be a three-month assessment by Monitor, the independent regulator of Foundation Trusts. If the Trust passes all these assessments it is anticipated that Foundation Trust status will be granted in early 2010.

'As an NHS Foundation Trust, East Sussex Hospitals will be much more accountable to the people to whom it provides hospital services and HOSC is supportive of the service strategy set out by the Trust in its application.'

Councillor John Wilson, East Sussex County Council (Hastings: Ashdown and Conquest)



NHS Dentistry

HOSC has monitored NHS dentistry services since June 2006 when it highlighted the lack of NHS dentists in certain parts of the county. The committee has raised the following concerns:

- Some of the most vulnerable people are not receiving dental treatment and health inequalities are not being addressed adequately.
- People do not know who to contact to find an NHS dentist
- In the opinion of dentists, the new contract does not offer enough incentive for those in private practice to return to the NHS.

Over the last two years, to some extent, HOSC concerns have been tackled by NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother. More NHS dental patients have been treated and over 80% of patients said that they got a dental appointment as soon as necessary. Waiting times for NHS dentistry in East Sussex have reduced and the number of dentists accepting NHS patients has increased. There has also been a decrease in enquiries from patients looking for a NHS dentist.



'Although there may be an overall theoretical distribution of NHS dentists with sufficient numbers of places, the actual spatial distribution can be patchy. So, people in one area whose dentist goes private may have little or no choice near to home, whereas people in another area do have a convenient local choice.'

Councillor Ruth O'Keeffe, East Sussex County Council (Lewes)

NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother have targets to increase the number of NHS dentistry patients and have completed an oral health needs analysis to find out where NHS dentistry services need to be improved to reduce inequalities and improve oral health.



'HOSC noted that NHS dentistry targets by 2011 are for NHS Hastings and Rother to meet the needs of 67% of the population (up from 61%) and for NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald to meet the needs of 60% of the population (up from 57%). HOSC is asking the Department of Health what an appropriate national target figure for access should be.'

Councillor David Rogers, Vice Chairman HOSC, East Sussex County Council (Newhaven and Ouse Valley West)

There is also a communications programme in place to improve awareness of how to access an NHS dentist and publicise the benefits of oral health. There are plans for further enhancements which include developing specialised services and reviewing emergency dental services.

'These improvements are welcome. However, HOSC continues to hear anecdotal evidence that some people perceive access to NHS dentistry to be difficult, such as in Battle, and they are unclear how to find an NHS dentist. Instances when a NHS dentist goes private can cause particular confusion for patients if not accompanied by clear information on their options for continuing private or NHS treatment.'

Councillor Angharad Davies, Rother District Council (Crowhurst)

HOSC will have a further session on NHS dentistry in September 2009. The committee also contributed to the Department of Health dentistry review which is expected to publish its report later in the year.



Cervical cancer schools vaccination programme

All 12-13 year old girls in East Sussex will be offered the HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) vaccination in a schools based programme which started in November 2008. The vaccine – Cervarix – protects against some strains of a virus which can cause cervical cancer, and is being given by a team of nurses. During the year, 17-18 year old women are also being offered HPV vaccine via GPs. These actions follow the October 2007 announcement by the Department of Health of the introduction of a national HPV vaccination programme to reduce the incidence of cervical cancer. The Department of Health estimates that 400 lives per year cohort can be saved through vaccination.

HOSC has been briefed on how the vaccination programme is operating in the county and it will review the first year's implementation in November 2009.

'HOSC is pleased to see this programme underway and the committee noted the measures being taken to ensure all eligible girls are offered the jab. Also, there is a clear message that cervical screening will continue. It's encouraging that East Sussex has quite good cervical screening uptake rates but it's crucial to ensure that women are aware that HPV vaccine does not protect against all causes of cervical cancer and they must still attend cervical screening.'

Janet Colvert, Chair, Local Involvement Network (LINK) Core Group

Improving uptake is a high priority for NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother and cervical screening is one of their key targets.



Choice and Booking

Choice and Booking has been on the HOSC agenda since the system's launch in March 2005. It is a national programme that combines electronic booking with a choice of place, date and time for first outpatient appointments. This forms part of the government's policy that patients will be offered a choice of treatment.

NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother have experienced a number of problems with Choice and Booking which have hindered its full and effective implementation. The uptake continues to be low with only 20% to 35% of East Sussex GP referrals being handled through the system compared to a national target of 90%. Although there is some scepticism about whether the 90% is appropriate, it was hoped that local rates

would rise beyond 50% by June 2008 to coincide with improvements designed to increase the number of referrals made through the system. However, these improvements have not resulted in the significant increase in the number of Choice and Booking referrals anticipated. HOSC noted that performance in East Sussex mirrors the national and South East region trends but at a lower level and managers are investigating the possible reasons for this.

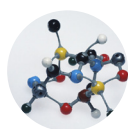
In March 2009, HOSC learned that overall referrer satisfaction with the system is improving but is fragile and easily damaged by any poor experience. NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother are trying to sort out the difficulties. Performance remains a concern but there is some confidence amongst managers that the range of measures being taken will lead to further improvements. The local NHS has also received £25,000 from the South East Coast Strategic Health Authority to run a campaign to raise public awareness of both the right to choose a provider and the means to do so using the Choice and Booking system.



'HOSC shares the frustrations of the local NHS in trying to find the key to open the door to success with Choice and Booking. It's encouraging to know that NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother are not going to give up on the system and it is right that patients should be able to have a choice.'

Councillor Philip Howson, East Sussex County Council (Peacehaven and Telscombe Towns)

HOSC will continue to keep an eye on the progress of Choice and Booking and will return to the topic in more detail in June 2010. The committee is aware that the Strategic Health Authority is taking a particular interest in the East Sussex situation.



Local Involvement Network (LINK)

East Sussex Local Involvement Network (LINK) was established in April 2008 to replace Patient and Public Involvement Forums. Organisational support is provided by East Sussex Disability Association (ESDA). LINKs have been set up across the country to help communities influence the way health and social care services are delivered. LINK's work programme is developed and managed by the LINK Core Group which is made up of 10 individuals elected by LINK participants plus 6 representatives of voluntary and community organisations.

Janet Colvert, Chair of the LINK Core Group has been nominated to be the LINK representative to sit on HOSC.

'HOSC welcomes the opportunities presented by LINK's broad remit across health and social care. LINK is able to refer matters to HOSC and we have a simple protocol on how we handle these issues. We will also work in partnership on some topics. We have the shared objective of wanting to make health and social care services better.'

Cllr Carolyn Lambert, Lewes District Council (Seaford Central)



Joint HOSC on West Sussex 'Fit for the Future' proposals

The joint HOSC was formed in July 2007 to consider NHS West Sussex and NHS Brighton and Hove's Fit for the Future proposals. These involved the reorganisation of some hospital services in West Sussex, particularly emergency care, maternity and inpatient paediatrics (children's services). The Joint HOSC consists of representatives of West Sussex, Hampshire, East Sussex, Surrey, Portsmouth and Brighton and Hove HOSCs. The two East Sussex HOSC representatives ensure that they bring the East Sussex dimensions to the review, in particular the ramifications of any changes at the Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath.

After thorough scrutiny of the Fit for the Future proposals, the Joint HOSC concluded that the planned configuration was not in the interests of the health services for people in West Sussex and the surrounding area. In particular, there remained insufficient clarity about the proposed service model and a lack of agreement between local doctors and other health professionals on the proposals.

In July 2008, the Joint HOSC referred the proposals to the Secretary of State for Health, Alan Johnson, and he asked the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) to conduct an investigation. However, in September, proposals were announced for a merger between Worthing and Southlands NHS Trust and Royal West Sussex NHS Trust, the main providers of the health services considered under the Fit for the Future banner. As a result, NHS West Sussex and NHS Brighton and Hove have put their Fit for the Future plans on hold. The IRP has delayed its investigation until the implications of the merger could be fully considered. A process is now underway in West Sussex to review the original decision and the Joint HOSC will consider the outcome of this later in 2009.

HOSC will be kept informed as the process unfurls.

'The Joint HOSC's goal has always been to ensure that West Sussex health services are accessible, safe, sustainable and meet the best standards of modern medicine for those who need them. A strong merged Trust on the south coast will help to ensure this is achieved.'

Councillor David Rogers, Vice Chairman, HOSC, East Sussex County Council (Newhaven and Ouse Valley West)



HOSC communications

HOSC is committed to an ongoing programme of communication about its activities. The website and webcast of meetings is supported by a quarterly newsletter which is sent out electronically. Paper copies are still available on demand. News releases about key activities are distributed and these are picked up by the local media for broadcast or print.

HOSC meetings have been broadcast live on the internet since November 2006 and are proving increasingly popular as more and more people log on to watch and listen to the debate live and subsequently. The HOSC website (www.eastsussexhealth.org) records between 5,000 and 10,000 visits per month.



Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Officers

March 2009

East Sussex County Council

Claire Lee, Scrutiny Lead Officer

Angela Reid, Head of Legal Services

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



Finance

HOSC finance statement

Expenditure for 2008/09

Officer support to HOSC	£18,500
Scrutiny reviews: project management and support	£22,000
Website maintenance/communications including four newsletters and annual report	£ 5,400
Webcasting of HOSC meetings	£ 2,500
Officer support for Chairman and individual Member scrutiny activities	£ 7,000
Programme development and liaison with key partners in health, Adult Social Care, Local Involvement Network (LINK), voluntary organisations etc	£ 4,500
Legal advice to HOSC	£ 2,500
Meeting room hire, audio visual kit hire, travel expenses and refreshments	£ 2,100
Other stationery and printing	£ 1,500
Total expenditure	£66,000

Funded by

East Sussex County Council (7 Seats)	£38,300
East Sussex district and borough council contributions (5 seats)	£27,700
Total income	£66,000

East Sussex
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Room C6F, County Hall
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 1SW

Telephone: 01273 481581
Fax: 01273 481208
Email: healthscrutiny@eastsussex.gov.uk

Website: www.eastsussexhealth.org

