



## Health Scrutiny in East Sussex Newsletter No. 22 September 2008

*This newsletter is produced by East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and provides an update on the progress made with Health Scrutiny in East Sussex.*

### Birth plans



Following the Secretary of State, Alan Johnson's rejection of East Sussex Downs and Weald PCT and Hastings and Rother PCT (East Sussex PCTs) proposals for maternity services in East Sussex, the PCTs will publish a plan, in early October, detailing the next steps. The plan will take forward recommendations from the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) which informed the Secretary of State's decision.

Vanessa Harris, Acting Chief Executive, East Sussex PCTs told HOSC that the PCTs are committed to working with their stakeholders to develop the plan and move towards formulating a comprehensive strategy for maternity and related services. She gave her assurance that the plan will be robust and set out a clear process for developing new proposals for consultant-led maternity, special baby care and inpatient gynaecology services in East Sussex.

### Improving ante and post natal care

Michael Wilson, Strategy and Projects Manager and Lynne Regent, Director of Development, East Sussex PCTs updated HOSC on progress in several other maternity-related areas. Improving antenatal and postnatal care, and associated outreach services remains a key objective and work is underway through the Maternity Strategy Group, made up of representatives from key organisations and stakeholders. The group is looking at how to implement recommendations on antenatal and postnatal care arising from Fit for the Future, as well as the wider 'Maternity Matters' agenda. These areas will now be taken forward within the wider maternity strategy required by the IRP.

### Maternity dashboard

A range of indicators such as maternity unit closures, staffing data and booking figures are being drawn together to give a clear picture of performance which can be used to identify and address any quality issues. This work is being informed by the King's Fund 'Safer Births' report and the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology recommendation that a 'maternity dashboard' of indicators should be used by maternity services to provide staff with effective information.

Councillor Sylvia Tidy, Chairman, HOSC said, 'HOSC welcomes the Secretary of

State's response. The committee is closely monitoring developments and will scrutinise East Sussex PCTs' new plans, ensuring that key stakeholders are involved. We particularly welcome the development of the 'maternity dashboard' and we can see that the longer the dashboard is used and worked with, the greater will be its usefulness.'

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## Spotlight on strokes



A stroke is the third most common cause of death in the UK and also the leading cause of severe disability. What level of care can stroke patients in East Sussex expect? And, could it be better?

These are questions HOSC is examining as part of its investigation into local NHS stroke care services.

Most people affected by stroke are over the age of 65, but anyone can have a stroke, including children.

The views of local people, especially of anyone with first-hand experience of stroke care services in East Sussex or health professionals, are particularly important to HOSC's investigations. If you would like to tell us your views on how services could be improved, please contact Sam White, Scrutiny Support Officer, at Room C6F, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1SW

You can also phone 01273 481581 or email [healthscrutiny@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:healthscrutiny@eastsussex.gov.uk)

A final report with recommendations for change will be submitted to local NHS and social care managers in March 2009.

The Review Board comprises: Cllr Angharad Davies (Chairman); Cllr Beryl Healy; Cllr Eve Martin; Cllr David Rogers. Cllr John Barnes, Chairman, East Sussex Downs and Weald PCT and Cllr Martyn Forster have joined the Review Board as respective co-optees of East Sussex PCT Boards and East Sussex County Council's Adult Social Care Committee.

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## £3m for mental health – improving therapy

£3 million over three years will be invested in psychological therapy services. The funding will 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. Lorraine Reid, Executive Director for East Sussex, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust revealed the plans to HOSC and explained that 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 are to start training this month at Brighton University.

Ms Reid also briefed HOSC on services for crisis intervention and early intervention in psychosis. The overall thrust of mental health services is moving toward embracing a more holistic approach to treatment rather than the historical emphasis on treating symptoms. She explained this means staff and services working in new ways.

Councillor Sylvia Tidy, Chairman HOSC said, 'HOSC welcomes this investment and the committee will monitor progress of the new strategy and its impact on service users.'

## West Sussex referral



The Secretary of State, Alan Johnson, has asked the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) to conduct an investigation into proposals put forward by West Sussex PCT in conjunction with Brighton and Hove City PCT on the future configuration of acute services in West Sussex. This followed the Joint HOSC's referral of the proposals to the minister in July.

After detailed scrutiny of the proposals undertaken by the committee, it concluded that the planned configuration was not in the interests of the health service in West Sussex and the surrounding area. In particular there remains insufficient clarity about the proposed service model and a lack of clinical consensus on the proposals. The committee expressed concerns on the financial sustainability of individual hospital Trusts under the plans. Also, the PCT failed to satisfy the committee that it has fully explored alternative options for the retention of consultant led maternity services at Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath and St Richard's Hospital, Chichester.

Cllr David Rogers and Cllr Diane Phillips are the East Sussex HOSC representatives on the Joint HOSC and Cllr Sylvia Tidy is the substitute. The councillors ensure that they bring the East Sussex dimensions to the review, in particular the ramifications of any changes to the Princess Royal Hospital.

## Bids for health centres

16 organisations have expressed interest in bidding to run the GP-led health centres planned for Eastbourne and Hastings. John Vesely, Head of Primary Care, East Sussex PCTs told HOSC that they are in the process of shortlisting and that the

evaluation criteria for the final tenders are being refined. Tender invitations will be issued to no more than five potential bidders for each service shortly. The Hastings health centre is part of the Station Plaza scheme. The Eastbourne centre will be located in the Devonshire ward but the site has still to be confirmed. The centres will not be operational in Eastbourne until April 2009 and in Hastings until December 2009.

Mr Vesely confirmed that the Silverhill clinic development (also known as the Upper St Leonards Primary Care Centre) is also on schedule. Discussions with GPs are underway. The Arthur Blackman clinic is being developed for the PCT's own provider services.

## Not so choice appointments



GPs' use of the online hospital appointments system, Choice and Booking, is falling short of target. East Sussex PCTs had hoped that the rate of referrals would have risen to around 54% by now. However, Hastings and Rother PCT's rate is currently at 35% and East Sussex Downs and Weald PCT at 32%. John Vesely, Head of Primary Care told HOSC that shortly after March there had been an initial improvement to 40% but this had gradually fallen back. The South East Coast Strategic Health Authority has set a challenging target for PCTs to reach 75% by December 2008, thus sending a clear message that a big improvement is needed.

Mr Vesely explained that a number of actions had been taken to try and boost the referral numbers such as ironing out

technical issues and also improving the availability of appointment slots. However, perhaps due to past problems with the system, some GPs are still reluctant to wholeheartedly embrace Choice and Booking and continue to use the old paper referral system.

HOSC learned that PCTs which used a referral management system to handle referrals away from the GP practice have better referral rates. However, East Sussex PCTs had specifically rejected going down this route, believing it to be against the spirit of Choice and Booking as it detracts from the patient/GP relationship. East Sussex PCTs are developing new strategies to persuade GPs to raise the usage levels of Choice and Booking. If these moves fail, HOSC understands that moving to a referral management system will be considered although the PCTs believe this would be a backward step.

## LINK website

East Sussex Local Involvement Network's (LINK) new website is up and running:

[www.thecountylink.net](http://www.thecountylink.net)

LINK is a network of local people, organisations and groups that want to make health and social care services better.

LINK provides everyone in the community - from individuals to voluntary groups - with the chance to say what you think about local health and social care services and your experiences.

The LINK is a way of letting the people who purchase, provide and manage your local services to hear about what is working and what isn't as well as suggesting ideas that could make services better.

## Next HOSC meeting

**10am Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2008** at County Hall, Lewes.

Webcast recordings and further details of meetings are available on the HOSC website: [www.eastsussexhealth.org](http://www.eastsussexhealth.org)

## HOSC 2007/2008

East Sussex County Council:

**Cllr Sylvia Tidy** Chairman  
**Cllr David Rogers OBE** Vice Chairman  
**Cllr Beryl Healy**  
**Cllr Philip Howson**  
**Cllr Ruth O'Keeffe**  
**Cllr Barry Taylor**  
**Cllr John Wilson**

Eastbourne Borough Council

**Cllr Alex Hough**

Hastings Borough Council

**Cllr Eve Martin**

Lewes District Council

**Cllr Carolyn Lambert**

Rother District Council

**Cllr Angharad Davies**

Wealden District Council

**Cllr Diane Phillips**

Voluntary services' representatives:

**Mr Ralph Chapman**

Chairman, Age Concern East Sussex

**Ms Debby Matthews**

Director, Southdowns CVS

East Sussex Local Involvement Network (LINK) representative:

**Ms Janet Colvert**, Chair LINK Interim Core Group

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East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) 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