



Health Scrutiny in East Sussex Newsletter No. 24 April 2009

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 of maternity services proposals



The shape of future maternity services in East Sussex has been laid out in a new strategy. Mike Wood, Chief Executive, NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS (the Primary Care Trusts) outlined the plans to HOSC recently. The planned improvements over the next three years include;

- further development of community services e.g. improved access to midwives and antenatal care
- development of a maternity 'network' between hospitals in Eastbourne, Hastings and Brighton
- implementation of a perinatal mental health network across Sussex to provide support to mothers to be and new mums
- development of integrated care pathways to improve outcomes for women and their families e.g. improved working between

community and hospital staff to provide a 'seamless' service.

HOSC welcomes progress on improving maternity services in East Sussex and supports the network approach to sustaining childbirth services led by doctors in local hospitals.

Councillor Sylvia Tidy said, 'The PCTs have worked hard, in co-operation with clinicians and interested local people, to develop and agree proposals for the future. HOSC will monitor the developments and review evidence to ensure that the improvements in services are delivered.'

Call for stroke care improvements

Recommendations designed to improve stroke care services have been made in the latest HOSC review. They include;

- making the public more aware of the causes and symptoms of stroke
- ensuring GPs and front line staff treat stroke cases as an emergency
- improving follow-up care/secondary prevention
- implementing a system to identify people at higher risk of stroke
- improving hospital discharge arrangements
- improving diagnostic services.

NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother will co-ordinate the response to the 20 recommendations.

HOSC will monitor and challenge progress.

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 the review in parallel with the development of a stroke strategy by the Primary Care Trusts. The committee wanted to challenge the emerging strategy and add value to it by undertaking research which could inform it. The review concentrated on the views of patients and carers and front-line staff. It investigated:

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

Acting FAST saves lives



Tracey Barron, Senior Education Manager, South East Coast Ambulance NHS Trust runs through the FAST test with Cllr Angharad Davies, Chair of the Stroke Review Board.

The review 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.

For a copy of the Stroke Review report go to www.eastsussexhealth.org For a paper copy, contact Sam White on 01273 481581 or sam.white@eastsussex.org.uk

Dawn of new model for day services

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 for working age adults 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 input from service users.

Commissioners have now appointed new providers for these services, following 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.

HOSC welcomed the new service model but recognised that it represents a large cultural shift away from the previous 'one size fits all' approach.

Councillor Sylvia Tidy said. 'HOSC was impressed with the consultation process surrounding the new proposals. 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 whole process was handled.'

The committee will return to the topic next year to look at how the new approach is bedding in.

Choice and Booking hiccups continue



Despite every effort, problems have continued to hinder the full and effective implementation of Choice and Booking, the national programme that combines electronic booking and a choice of place, date and time for first outpatient appointments. John Vesely, Head of Primary Care, NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother briefed HOSC on the latest position. The uptake continues to disappoint with only 20% to 35% of East Sussex GPs referrals being handled through the system compared to a national target of 90%. HOSC noted that performance in the county mirrors the trends in the national and South East region but at a lower level. The Primary Care Trusts are investigating the possible reasons for the 'same but lower' pattern.

Mr Vesely assured HOSC that the PCTs will not give up on the system. His team is trying to sort out the difficulties and the number of practices using Choice and

Booking has increased. The PCTs have also got funding from the South East Coast Strategic Health Authority (SHA) 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 will continue to keep an eye on the progress of Choice and Booking. The SHA, too, is taking an interest in the East Sussex situation.

Health centre contracts awarded

Five-year contracts have been awarded to South East Health to run two new GP-led health centres. The Eastbourne centre will be in the town's railway station complex and is scheduled to open in September 2009. The Hastings centre will be on the ground floor of the Hastings Station Plaza Primary Care Centre and is scheduled to open in June 2010.

Councillor Sylvia Tidy said, 'HOSC endorses these plans. Both towns attract a large number of visitors, including many tourists and students, who will be able to use the centres and walk-in facilities. The centres are in areas which have a high level of deprivation and so will be able to provide a range of accessible primary and community services to a needy population.'

The centres are part of wider programme of improving access to primary medical services which also includes extending existing GP practice opening hours.

The Station Plaza development in Hastings will also provide new premises for six local GP practices and the local sexual health services from 2010. HOSC renewed its support for the development which will offer improved facilities for patients.

South East Health has been an independent provider of health service since 1996 and is run as a not for profit organisation. The company's medical staff are a mix of local GPs and directly employed GPs and nurses.

Health plans in West Sussex under review

As a result of the Fit for the Future programme, West Sussex Primary Care Trust (PCT) concluded that three major services should be centralised: inpatient paediatrics, consultant-led inpatient maternity services and emergency surgery. The PCT is now reviewing the Board's original decision, in the light of the proposed merger between Worthing and Southlands NHS Trust and Royal West Sussex NHS Trust. The PCT will set up clinical groups to review the evidence and either confirm the original decision on the service model or come up with new proposals between now and June. The proposals will then be discussed by various interested parties before being submitted to the PCT Board in September. Depending on the nature of any new proposals, further public consultation may then be required in the Autumn.

The Joint HOSC, formed to scrutinise the original Fit for the Future proposals, will consider the outcome of the PCT's review, probably in September and make recommendations. The Joint HOSC referred the original proposals to the Secretary of State for Health. Thus, the committee could reconfirm this referral or, if there are different proposals, these would need to be considered along with any consultation process.

LINK news

East Sussex Local Involvement Network (LINK) is now one year old and has moved forward hugely and achieved a great deal. Recently, the LINK held a 'one year on' event to discuss progress and future plans with stakeholders. A three year rolling programme has been developed which is able to respond to issues raised by LINK members and members of the public. Cross border health services has been one area of recent work.

LINK website:

www.thecountylink.net

Personnel



Ralph Taylor has stepped down from HOSC as he has resigned from his networker post at South Downs CVS. We wish him every success for the

future. The Speak Up Forum will nominate his successor to join HOSC.

Next HOSC meeting

10am Monday 6th July 2009 at County Hall, Lewes

Topics include:

- Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust development plans under its Teaching, Trauma and Tertiary strategy
- South East Coast Ambulance NHS Trust's estates strategy

If you have any comments or experience concerning these topics or any other health issue affecting people in East Sussex which you would like HOSC to know about, please email them to healthscrutiny@eastsussex.gov.uk

Or send them to Sam White, HOSC, Room C6F, County Hall, Lewes BN7 1SW

Webcast recordings and further details of meetings are available on the HOSC website: www.eastsussexhealth.org

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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