



Health Scrutiny in East Sussex Newsletter 002 – January 04

This newsletter provides an update on the progress made with health scrutiny arrangements in East Sussex.



Reviews underway

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) programme of reviews is well underway. Its first theme is patients' choices and access to services. The second review is on the effectiveness of ways of combating alcohol, tobacco, drugs and substance misuse amongst young people. (see overleaf)

HOSC has selected a further 7 topics in its 2003/2004 work programme. These are;

- ❖ Services for older people
- ❖ Community hospitals
- ❖ Mental health
- ❖ Carers
- ❖ NHS Dentistry
- ❖ Hospital hygiene
- ❖ Ambulance service

How to prioritise reviews?

To decide how to prioritise these reviews, residents of East Sussex are being asked for their views, particularly making use of

the HOSC website at www.eastsussexhealth.org. The website's interactive features allow comments to be made and relevant suggestions to be fed through to the committee.

If you have no access to a computer and want to pass on your views, please complete the attached questionnaire and return to Sam White, Floor E, East Block, County Hall, Lewes BN7 1SF.

The objective of the committee's work will be to act on the health issues affecting local people and identifying the sort of changes that could realistically be carried out. Recommendations will be made to the health providers and patients' representatives.

Reactive work

The second key strand of the HOSC work is to respond to reviews and reorganisations being carried out by PCTs and NHS Trusts in East Sussex where the proposals are for a substantial development of the health service in the area.

HOSC will raise concerns; ask why decisions have been made and propose alternative solutions if 'a better way' seems to be a possibility. We have developed a protocol which means HOSC can react swiftly to developments as the need arises.

Currently, we are seeking a statement from the NHS on action being taken on All Saints Hospital, Eastbourne. Also, we are keeping up to date with the Clinical Services Review. Michael Wilson, Programme Director and Rick Stern, Chief Executive, Bexhill & Rother PCT will present to HOSC on 4 February 2004.

1st review – ‘Patient choice: reality or pipedream?’

Are the choices of patients taken into account? If you're ill, is the first place you go to for treatment easily accessible? Do you have to wait for days to get a GP's appointment? Have you had problems being treated if you've become ill in the night or at weekends?

These major issues are being examined by the first review board of HOSC. With this first project set to be completed in Spring 2004, the board's investigations include information about the experience of users, evidence of how local services are provided and interviews with health officials.

The review will challenge the ways that things are currently done and look for models of good practice.

We are still keen to hear first hand experiences from patients across East Sussex. If you would like to talk about local access to health care, please contact Sam White on (01273) 481581 or e-mail: sam.white@eastsussexcc.gov.uk

2nd review - Alcohol and substance misuse

Ways of combating alcohol, tobacco, drugs and substance misuse - focusing on children and young people – is being examined by the HOSC in their second review.



The economic and social impact of alcohol, drug and substance misuse is thought to be significant: effects on individuals can be extremely serious and there is a strong link between problematic drug use and crime.

Alcohol and substance misuse is one of the key health concerns in East Sussex and we will look at major issues and find new ways of working to achieve improvements. We'll gather information and talk to the relevant agencies who are already tackling these problems. We will want to know if the best and most appropriate measures are in place to beat these problems.

On the web

Click into the HOSC website on www.eastsussexhealth.org for all the latest news on HOSC activities. Click into 'your view' and send in your comments on health services in the county.

Use the site to find out more about the HOSC work programme as well as the answers to frequently asked questions. A host of information is available including the HOSC agendas, minutes and reports and information on the HOSC members. There are also links to PCTs, NHS bodies and District and Borough websites.

Working with neighbouring HOSCs

The HOSC is setting up joint working arrangements with neighbouring HOSCs. We have had discussions with representatives from West Sussex CC and Brighton & Hove City Council about how they will get involved when developments and actions taken by PCT and NHS bodies affect people right across our area.

Reference group

The induction meeting of the HOSC reference group is taking place on Thursday 26 February 2004. This group is made up of people who have been in the NHS or associated services and have recent and relevant experience without a conflict of interest. Operating as a 'virtual' group, members will be called upon to give advice, information and specialist expertise on particular areas of health and health matters that may be put before the committee.

The group will be advising on a number of aspects surrounding the reviews underway. We would like to continue to build the group and if you have any suggestions for membership please contact Roger Howarth on (01273) 481327 or e-mail: roger.howarth@eastsussexcc.gov.uk

New HOSC member

Cllr John Webber has succeeded Cllr David Neighbour as the Lewes DC representative on the HOSC. John is newly elected on to Lewes DC but has served on Lewes Town Council since 1999. He is a retired head teacher, and has always been particularly interested in education and the environment. With a retired Health Visitor and an Environmental Health Officer in his

immediate family, health issues are not new to him! He welcomes the opportunity to help monitor those services which affect the health of the people of East Sussex.



Training programme

The HOSC members have undertaken a full programme of induction seminars to familiarise themselves with the workings of the NHS and to ensure familiarity with the likely health issues and matters which will be encountered in the future.

Health

Health executives briefed HOSC members and officers on the key issues facing the local health economy.

Health presentations were given by Mary Colato (Chair, Eastbourne Downs PCT); Stephanie Parkes-Crick (Chief Executive, East Sussex County Healthcare NHS Trust); Fiona Henniker (Chief Executive, Sussex Downs and Weald PCT); Toni Wilkinson (Chief Executive, Hastings & St Leonards PCT); and Kate Harmond (Director of Service Development & Modernisation, East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust). The powerful video 'Patient Choice' was also shown. Rick Stern (Chief Executive, Bexhill & Rother PCT) facilitated the ensuing discussion.

Voluntary organisations

HOSC members were briefed by representatives of the voluntary organisations and learned how the work of these organisations was delivering and supporting health improvement.

Dennis Yates, Chief Executive, East Sussex Disability Association talked on the nature of voluntary organisations and how they worked. Diane Parr, Director, Age Concern East Sussex covered the contribution that voluntary organisations make to the health agenda and Lesley Goble, Director Association of Voluntary Services presented on the organisation of the voluntary sector and how it can contribute to HOSC.

The story so far

The final seminar in the programme outlined the health scrutiny story so far. Barbara Deacon, Managing Associate, Audit Commission outlined the national view on health scrutiny and the expectations of HOSC in the future. Irene Dibben, Non-executive director East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust presented the Health sector's perspective. Various members of HOSC gave updates on activities and progress to date.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Bill Bentley, Chairman,
East Sussex CC
Cllr Ron Dyason, East Sussex CC
Cllr Mrs Joanne Gadd, Rother DC
Cllr Beryl Healy, East Sussex CC
Cllr Bert Leggett, Eastbourne BC
Cllr Mrs Ann Leigh, East Sussex CC
Cllr John Webber, Lewes DC
Cllr Mrs Diane Phillips, Wealden DC
Cllr David Rogers, East Sussex CC
Cllr Ronald Rushbrook, Hastings BC
Cllr Phil Scott, East Sussex CC
Cllr Mrs Joy Waite, Vice Chairman,
East Sussex CC

Voluntary Organisations' representatives:
Ralph Chapman, Chairman Age Concern East Sussex
Rosemary Iddenden, Branch Manager, Alzheimer's Society

Legal advisor: Richard Partridge
Committee Secretary: Michaela Frost
Lead Officer: Roger Howarth

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**The next meeting of the HOSC is at
10am on Friday 12 March 2004 at
County Hall, Lewes.**

