



## Health Scrutiny in East Sussex Newsletter December 2005 – Christmas Edition

No. 009

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

### Happy Christmas

HOSC Chairman, members and officers would like to wish you and your colleagues a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

to be resolved or considered further before the system's benefits could be fully realised. These included the reluctance of some GPs to accept the electronic system and concerns on consultants rejecting a patient's appointment. Terri Agnew, Choose and Book Manager provided some reassurance on these issues in a presentation to HOSC on the scheme. HOSC will monitor the roll-out of the system with interest.

## Choose and book welcomed



Good progress on the Choose and Book scheme, whereby patients are given a choice of where they are treated for elective care, has been welcomed by HOSC. It recognises the longer term benefits for patients in terms of flexibility and control. However, members highlighted a number of issues that need

## Newhaven Rehab Centre

HOSC members have questioned the decision to mothball beds at Newhaven Rehabilitation Centre especially when there is such an urgent need for additional intermediate care beds in the county. Fiona Henniker, Chief Executive, Sussex Downs and Weald PCT assured members that the mothballing was part of the wider 'best care, best place' strategy which will ensure an appropriate balance between intermediate and specialist services in the Lewes area in the long term.

Ms Henniker emphasised that the temporary closure was carried out with the full involvement of clinical staff and was in the best interests of patients. It is anticipated that the centre will re-open at some time in the future with specialist beds. HOSC is monitoring the situation.

## **PCT consultation kicks off**

Consultation, by the Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority, is underway on whether there should be one or two PCTs in East Sussex. The decision will be made after the consultation finishes in March 2006. The County Council supports the single PCT model because of the benefits to its commissioning activities and its fit with the County's adult social care services and children's trust. Some parties, particularly in the east of the county, support the two PCT model arguing that this will best achieve a better local focus. HOSC will provide its views during the consultation.

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### **Bed blocking**



Adult Social Care and health partners are working on an agreed new strategy to solve the county's bed blocking (delayed transfers of care) problem.

Whilst a main cause of the problem is funding, the Audit Commission has previously highlighted the need to better manage admissions to hospital and to focus on 'whole systems' operating between the hospital trusts, PCTs and social care services.

So far there has been no common agreement between Social Services and the hospital trusts how to spend the money gained from fines. Most of the money has so far been paid to East Sussex Hospitals NHSTrust as they are the largest partner. To solve the problem requires more investment in community based alternatives and this requires a more effective agreement between all the partners.

To initiate the new era of closer partnership working, a new admission criteria was introduced on 1 December 2005 to clarify who will be admitted to acute wards. This means that the commissioning PCTs, hospital trust and adult social care now have had a common view and so HOSC would expect to see changes in flows of patients through hospitals.

There are delays between arranging and transferring patients out of hospitals due to funding not being available. East Sussex is out of line with other areas but there has been a shift in the hospital's strategic approach. There remain issues about bed capacity in Eastbourne.

HOSC will hold discussions with all partners in the New Year to check the progress of these initiatives.

### **Special HOSC meeting on bed blocking**

A special HOSC meeting is being held at 4pm on Friday 3 March 2006 to discuss bed blocking and other issues with Kim Hodgson, Chief Executive and John Lewis, Chairman, East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust. Other partners, the commissioning PCTs and County Council will be invited to participate. (Eastbourne venue to be confirmed.)

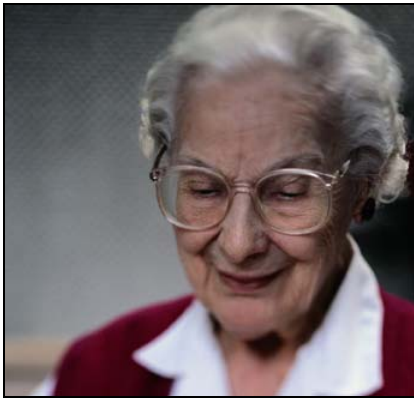
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### **What an estate!**

Proposals for the development of at least three new health centres by Hastings & St Leonards PCT have been welcomed by HOSC. The proposals are part of the PCT's estates strategy to be implemented by the PCT during the period 2004-2012. The modern, spacious and welcoming primary care services will offer a wide range of accessible services, with the potential to house multiple GPs and practice teams, alongside other primary and community services.

HOSC would like to see the model used in elsewhere. The one caveat raised by members was that there should be lots of parking available at the centres.

## 'Panorama' update



Brighton and Hove Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust PPI Forum has followed up the Panorama programme which criticised care of the elderly in the Peel and Stewart wards at the Royal Sussex Hospital.

HOSC was delighted to hear that the PPIF had now been able to make unannounced visits to the wards and had found the staff welcoming and helpful. The PPIF expressed some concern that little money had been spent on improving the actual wards themselves compared to other facilities.

HOSC considered the issues highlighted by the Panorama programme are a national problem. HOSC decided to note the position and monitor progress.

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## Annual report hits the streets

The HOSC 2004/2005 Annual Report has been published. The report illustrates the committee's steady progress and achievements throughout the past year and sets the scene for its future development. Newsletter readers should have already received their copy.

If additional copies are required, contact Sam White on 01273 481581 or email: [sam.white@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:sam.white@eastsussex.gov.uk)

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## Burning issue

HOSC is becoming involved in a national review of burn care services. The National Burn Care Group has been taking forward recommendations from the National Burn Care Review Report (March 2001).

The Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead is currently the main provider of burns care across the south east. The hospital is looking to become a burns centre for adults and unit status for paediatric patients. However, if early recommendations were to be adopted, the south east could have just two adult burns centres – one in Chelmsford and one in central London.

Cllr Philip Howson is the HOSC representative in any joint arrangements established to consider proposals.

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## Busy buddies

Following the 'buddying' up by HOSC members with individual PPI Forums, the 'buddies' have been busy building relationships with their forum and discussing various health issues.

Topics which have been shared include problems receiving flu jabs in the Bexhill area, pharmacy services in Eastbourne, access to scanner readers, closure of wards at Conquest Hospital, movement of the sterilisation unit to Eastbourne and the waiting times for ultrasound



## HOSC

East Sussex County Council:

**Cllr Bob Lacey OBE** Chairman  
**Cllr David Rogers OBE** Vice Chairman  
**Cllr Beryl Healy**  
**Cllr Philip Howson**  
**Cllr Carl Maynard**  
**Cllr Ruth O'Keeffe**  
**Cllr John Wilson**

Eastbourne Borough Council

**Cllr Colin Belsey**

Hastings Borough Council

**Cllr Eve Martin**

Lewes District Council

**Cllr Ralph Taylor**

Rother District Council

**Cllr Christopher Starnes**

Wealden District Council

**Cllr Diane Phillips**

Voluntary services' representatives:

**Mr Ralph Chapman, Age Concern**

**Mrs Rosemary Iddenden, Alzheimer's Society**



## Officer contact details:

### East Sussex County Council

Paul Dean 01273 481751  
Scrutiny Lead Officer  
[paul.dean@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:paul.dean@eastsussex.gov.uk)

Annie Petch 01273 481935  
Committee Secretary  
[annie.petch@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:annie.petch@eastsussex.gov.uk)

Richard Partridge 01273 481689  
Legal Adviser  
[richard.partridge@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:richard.partridge@eastsussex.gov.uk)

Sam White 01273 481581  
Scrutiny Support Officer  
[sam.white@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:sam.white@eastsussex.gov.uk)

### Eastbourne Borough Council

Neil Fuller 01323 415301  
Director of Housing, Health & Community Services  
[neil.fuller@eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:neil.fuller@eastbourne.gov.uk)

### Hastings Borough Council

Katrina Strong 01424 781747  
Scrutiny Officer  
[kstrong@hastings.gov.uk](mailto:kstrong@hastings.gov.uk)

### Lewes District Council

Ian Kedge 01273 484353  
Head of Environment and Health  
[ian.kedge@lewes.gov.uk](mailto:ian.kedge@lewes.gov.uk)

### Rother District Council

Brenda Mason 01424 787860  
Head of Policy and Performance  
[brenda.mason@rother.gov.uk](mailto:brenda.mason@rother.gov.uk)

### Wealden District Council

Jeremy Leach 01323 443322  
Public Health Development Manager  
[jeremy.leach@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:jeremy.leach@wealden.gov.uk)

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## Future HOSC meetings

**4pm Friday 3 March 2006, Eastbourne**

**10am Friday 17 March 2006, Lewes**