



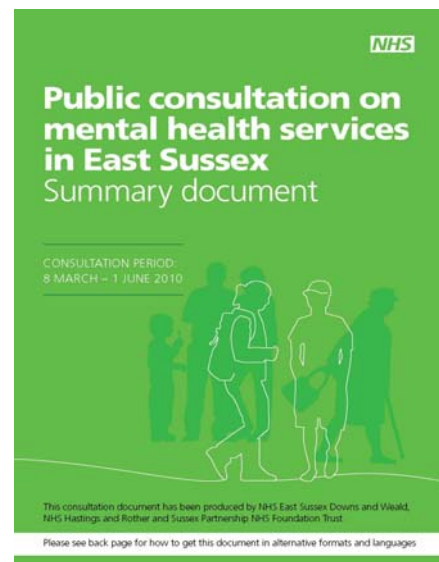
HOSC mental health service recommendations accepted

All HOSC's recommendations on planned changes to mental health services for adults have been accepted by NHS East Sussex Downs & Weald/Hastings & Rother and Sussex Partnership Trust. HOSC had given qualified support to the plans to provide more mental health care in the community and a subsequent reduction in the number of inpatient beds in East Sussex over the next 12 months or so. The Committee produced a full report on the proposals with seven recommendations.

The NHS East Sussex Downs & Weald/Hastings & Rother Boards considered the report alongside other evidence, including consultation responses, in July before making a decision. The Boards approved an option which involves the eventual closure of 10 beds at the Woodlands Unit in Hastings and 20 at the Department of Psychiatry in Eastbourne, once improved community services have been put in place.

HOSC's recommendations focused on strong and open monitoring so that everyone can see whether commitments to improvements in community services are being met, meaning beds can be safely reduced. HOSC has made a commitment to scrutinise progress closely, and the Task Group formed to examine the proposals will reconvene in early 2011 to review performance and seek views from service user and carer representatives.

HOSC's report can be downloaded from www.eastsussexhealth.org or call Claire Lee on 01273 481327 for a copy.



Food for thought in HOSC nutrition report



HOSC has published a report on nutrition, hydration and feeding in local hospitals. The review was prompted by national work such as Age Concern's 'Hungry to be Heard' campaign and the national nutrition action plan. HOSC wanted to see how well this sort of guidance was being implemented locally to ensure patients receive the right nutritional care in hospital.

The review investigated issues such as the extent of screening for malnutrition, use of protected mealtimes, provision of assistance with eating and drinking, the quality of food and the information provided to patients and carers.

As part of the review, HOSC commissioned Local Involvement Network (LINK) volunteers to visit the hospitals in Eastbourne, Hastings, Brighton and Haywards Heath to observe practice at mealtimes and to interview patients and carers about their experiences.

HOSC's report includes 10 recommendations for local hospital trusts in areas such as
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ensuring patients are aware of the full range of food options, encouraging hand hygiene at mealtimes, having a consistent approach to assisting patients, and continuing to work on effective screening for malnutrition. East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust and Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust have been invited to respond to the report and to discuss the recommendations with the Committee at its next meeting on 18th November.

Cllr Sylvia Tidy, HOSC Chairman, said, "The NHS Trusts have worked very hard to improve things over the last few years but there is still some way to go. We will work closely with the Trusts and monitor progress to ensure the very best practices are put in place."

The HOSC report, and the reports by the LINKs, can be downloaded from the HOSC website www.eastsussexhealth.org or contact Claire Lee on 01273 481327 for copies.

Key time for dementia strategy

Additional funding of £1.5m has been obtained from a regional fund for investment in dementia care in East Sussex this year. With an ageing population and tighter finances on the horizon, there is a window of opportunity to transform care for the future.

Martin Packwood, Joint Commissioning Manager for Mental Health, told HOSC that the funding would be used to boost early diagnosis of dementia and to run a publicity campaign to encourage people who may be experiencing memory problems to come forward for assessment. A dementia advisor service has been launched to offer advice and support to patients and carers and signpost people to specialist services as necessary. Other developments are an 'in-reach' service working with care homes to reduce hospital admissions and establishing a local dementia research unit.



Alongside these specific developments, work is underway to review all the resources available for dementia care, in both the NHS and social care, to see how best to use these in the future, given the increasing demand for services and pressure on budgets.

Councillor Sylvia Tidy, HOSC Chairman, commented "Given the older age profile of our county, HOSC is very supportive of the priority being accorded to dementia care. The role of dementia advisors in particular will be very welcome to patients and their families and HOSC is pleased to hear that the advisor service pilot project is progressing well."

Maternity strategy starts delivering



The East Sussex Maternity Strategy is beginning to deliver improvements in care. Jamal Zaidi, Divisional Director for Women and Children's Services at East Sussex Hospitals Trust told HOSC that key achievements include a reduction in caesarean section rates, more availability of consultants on the labour ward and the launch of a new referral pathway to improve women's access to care via GPs and midwives.

However, Mr Zaidi said there are still ongoing challenges in the recruitment of doctors and in areas such as improving breastfeeding rates and sustaining work on perinatal mental health for mothers. Future work will include participating in a regional project to encourage 'normal' birth, particularly after a previous caesarean section, and for first time mums. The Trust is also looking at the mix of skills amongst its midwives to ensure their expertise is used most effectively. HOSC reviewed a selection of data which gave an overview of the outcomes being achieved for women and babies. The Committee made suggestions for improving the presentation of the data to make it more informative and will receive a further progress report in March 2011.

New dawn for mental health day services

A new approach to day and vocational mental health services is having an impact. HOSC supported the new model, which represents a move away from traditional day centres towards supporting engagement in mainstream activities and work, back in 2009. The Committee asked for an assessment of progress one year on.

Kate Dawson, Strategic Commissioning Manager for the County Council, told HOSC that the new vocational service has helped to place an average of four service users a month into paid work. The new community links service has supported service users to pursue their own interests without being tied to day centres, whilst well-being centres offer a base where service users can access information, activities, peer support and a 'safe space'.

HOSC checked that the services are meeting the aim of engaging new service users who had not used the traditional services, and were assured that this is the case and that travel support is available to those needing it, particularly in rural areas.

Councillor Sylvia Tidy said, "HOSC recognised that the transition to this new model would be challenging for some service users, who may have been using the previous services for some time. That's why we wanted to check that the new approach is bedding in satisfactorily and starting to deliver the promised benefits."

Early rehab crucial to improved stroke care



HOSC continues to scrutinise progress on stroke care following the Committee's original report on the subject in 2009. The latest progress report, presented by Nicky Murrell, Assistant Director of Strategy and Jane Strong, Programme Lead, from NHS East Sussex Downs & Weald/Hastings and Rother, showed further improvement.

24/7 thrombolysis (clot-busting drugs) was introduced in the Hastings and Eastbourne hospitals in April 2010 and access to scans has continued to improve. In addition, 10,000 health checks had been carried out by July 2010 and there is some evidence that publicity campaigns have helped to raise people's awareness of stroke symptoms.

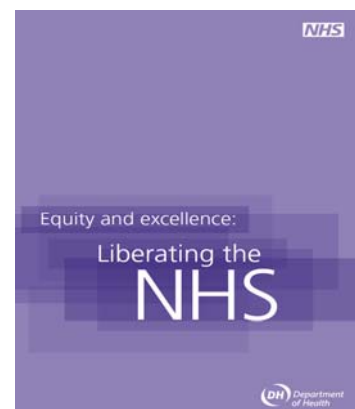
However, more progress is needed on rehabilitation. Lengths of stay in hospital for stroke patients are still well above the recommended level and the aim is to give patients access to specialist rehabilitation much earlier, to enable them to leave hospital for an inpatient rehab unit or support at home. Earlier access to rehab will free up capacity in the hospital stroke units, enabling more new stroke patients to be admitted directly to their specialist care rather than onto general wards. HOSC requested a further update in June 2011.

HOSC response to NHS White Paper

In July 2010 the Government published 'Equity and Excellence', a White Paper on the future of the NHS. Over the summer HOSC has been considering the local implications of the proposals, which represent significant change, including the creation of consortia of GPs to lead the commissioning of services (replacing Primary Care Trusts), the transfer of public health roles to local authorities and a focus on measuring performance through outcomes for patients.

Several consultation documents have been issued to seek views on the plans. HOSC is planning to respond to 'Local Democratic Legitimacy', the document outlining new roles for local authorities, including elected councillors.

The HOSC response will be available on www.eastsussexhealth.org by 11th October and the Committee will look at aspects of the changes, and the local response, at future meetings.



News in brief

Building starts in Hellingly

The expansion of Sussex Partnership Trust's secure and forensic mental health facilities in Hellingly has gained planning permission and building work has begun. The expansion was previously supported by HOSC in the light of increasing demand for places and benefits to service users and the local economy.

HOSC Member steps down

Dave Rogers of Hastings and Rother Health and Social Care Forum has stepped down from his role as one of HOSC's voluntary and community sector representatives. A replacement representative is being sought via the 'Speak Up' voluntary sector forum. Cllr Sylvia Tidy said, "I would like to thank Dave for all his input during his time on the Committee."

Next HOSC meeting

10am Thursday 18th November 2010 at County Hall, Lewes

Webcast recordings and meeting details available on the website www.eastsussexhealth.org

HOSC Members

East Sussex County Council:

Cllr Sylvia Tidy - Chairman
Cllr David Rogers OBE - Vice Chairman
Cllr Carolyn Heaps
Cllr Philip Howson
Cllr Ruth O'Keeffe
Cllr Peter Pragnell
Cllr Barry Taylor

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 Maurice Langham
East Sussex Seniors Association
(One vacancy)

East Sussex Local Involvement Network
(LINK) representative:

Ms Janet Colvert
Chair, East Sussex LINK core group

Contact:

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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

