



News Release

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For Immediate Release

HOSC welcomes maternity decision

News today that Eastbourne can keep its consultant-led maternity services has been warmly welcomed by members of the East Sussex Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC).

Cllr Sylvia Tidy, HOSC chair, summed up the committee's reaction saying:

"This announcement is a fantastic result for East Sussex and confirms the value of the committee in its role as a watchdog, holding local health bodies to account on behalf of local communities.

HOSC called in the Secretary of State because we, as local councillors, were unconvinced by the proposals. The committee felt an independent review was necessary to check that the plans were safe for local people.

This was not a decision HOSC took lightly. We spent five months gathering evidence before coming to this conclusion. We heard from hospital doctors, midwives, GPs, the National Childbirth Trust (NCT), South East Coast Ambulance Trust, Patient and Public Involvement Forums and, essentially, the local mothers that use the services.

Our own findings have now been validated by the Independent Review Panel, and the ruling by the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP.

Our priority now is to work with the Primary Care Trusts' to ensure local people continue to receive the high standards of maternity care they need - at both Eastbourne and Hastings."

Notes for editors

- In January, HOSC voted to refer the PCTs' maternity plans to the Secretary of State, the Rt. Hon Alan Johnson MP.
- The two district general hospitals concerned are in Eastbourne and Hastings, situated approximately 21 miles apart on the coastal strip of East Sussex. In terms of the maternity service, both hospitals currently offer a consultant-led obstetric (childbirth) service with the Eastbourne site handling approximately 1900 births and the Hastings site approximately 1700 births (based on 2006/7 figures). This works out at approximately 5 births per day per site, of which statistically 2 per day at each site will require some form of medical intervention.
- HOSC is made up of members of local district and borough councils as well as the county council, with additional members representing the voluntary sector, and the Local Involvement Network (LINK).



The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee 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.

- HOSC supports local people, by examining all major health-care decisions taken within the county. It acts as a 'critical friend' by suggesting ways that health related services might be improved. It also looks at the way the health service interacts with the County Council's social care services, the voluntary sector, independent providers and other council services to jointly provide better health services to meet the diverse needs of East Sussex residents and improve their well-being.
- HOSC is currently examining stroke care services, and will make recommendations to the county's Primary Care Trusts in March 2009.

For further information please contact:
Charlotte Johnson
Tel: 01273 481435
Email: charlotte.johnson@eastsussex.gov.uk



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