

Wiltshire Council

Council

13 November 2012

Questions from Councillors

From Cllr Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To

Cllr Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council

Question 1

Is she aware of the revelations on the recent Channel 4 Dispatches programme about the extent of NHS services across the country which have been taken over by Virgin Care, and the serious reductions in service which followed?

Will she give an assurance that she would use her influence on the Wiltshire Health and Well-being Board to resist the takeover of NHS services in Wiltshire by private companies like Virgin Care?

Response

The focus of the new health system is intended to be on **improved outcomes**, regardless of the status of the service provider (NHS, private or 3rd sector organisations). The Health and Wellbeing Board will have a big part to play in monitoring these improvements.

The Health and Wellbeing Board is in shadow form at present and will not officially start as a formal committee until April 2013. It is currently developing its role, membership, work plans, and a new health and wellbeing strategy.

There will be a number of channels and checks which can be used to ensure services that are commissioned by the CCG and others are high quality, meet the needs of the local community, and achieve good value for money. A number of examples are highlighted below.

- The membership of the health and wellbeing board will include key representatives that will have oversight of all health related services in Wiltshire. It will work closely and encourage integrated working between commissioners of NHS, public health and social care services. As the chair I will seek to build these relationships and promote the most appropriate health services to meet the needs of all Wiltshire residents.

- A new first draft of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been developed and will be published for consultation in November. The commissioning plan produced by the CCG must have regard to this strategy, consult and improve choice, and follow the NHS Commissioning Board mandate.
- The Council will continue to undertake health scrutiny through its Health Select Committee.
- The setting up of Local Healthwatch, which will act for the benefit for the local community. This will involve patients and the public in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local health and care services. It will be able to make recommendations and will be represented on the Health and Wellbeing board and the board of the CCG.
- The new role of Monitor, which makes it the independent regulator of all healthcare services. Its role includes making sure all healthcare services are economic, efficient and effective; maintaining and improving the quality of services; licensing all NHS healthcare providers; and addressing anti-competitive behaviour in the provision of health care services where this is against the interests of patients.

All of this work undertaken as part of the new health reforms will seek to ensure health services in Wiltshire will be developed and enhanced for the benefit of all local residents.

(Background note: The Channel 4 programme was broadcast on 29 October 2012 and was titled 'Getting Rich on the NHS'. It looked at healthcare contracts being awarded to private firms and focused on Virgin Care. More information is available from the following link:

<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/episode-guide/series-112/episode-4>)