



Wiltshire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES of a MEETING held at WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 17 MAY 2007

PRESENT: County Councillors; Dr John English, Mr Jeff Osborn, Brgdr Robert Hall, Mr Bill Moss, Mrs Pat Rugg, Mrs Judy Seager, Mr Roy While, Mrs White. District Councillors: Mrs Paula Winchcombe (Kennet District Council), Mr Mike Hewitt (Salisbury District Council), Mr Brian Mudge (West Wiltshire District Council)

STAKEHOLDERS: Dr Peter Biggs, Mr Terry White, Mr Mike Griffiths (Wiltshire Patient's Forum), Mrs Jill Tompkins (RUH Patient's Forum), Ms Helen Thomson, (AWP Patient's Forum), Mrs Jean Cole (User & Carers' Network).

OTHER COUNCILLORS: Mr John Thomson & Mrs Mary Douglas, Wiltshire County Council Cabinet Members for Community Services

OTHERS: Alison Knowles, Jenny Edwards, Wiltshire Primary Care Trust; Lyn Hill-Tout, Swindon & Marlborough Trust, Malcolm Sinclair, AWP Mental Health Trust, June Sadd, Wiltshire & Swindon User's Network, Ceri Williams, Gillian Leake, Jo Howes, Wiltshire County Council, Miranda Gilmour, North Wilts District Council, Helen Karn, Kennet District Council

Members of the public present: 5

17. Apologies

Mollie Groom
North Wilts DC yet to appoint a co-opted member

18. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting held on 15 March 2007.

19. Chairman's Announcements

A new Director of Public Health, Maggie Rae, has been appointed jointly by the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Wiltshire County Council (WCC).

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Brian Mudge as the new representative from West Wiltshire District Council

20. Member's Interests

Jeff Osborn, Chair, Trowbridge Hospital League of Friends
Paula Winchcombe, DASH
Pat Rugg, DASH
Margaret White, Health Advocacy Partnership

21. Public Participation

22. Wiltshire Primary Care Trust – Update on Service Reconfiguration for Wiltshire

The Chairman announced that the Pathways for Change Task Group had changed its name to the Service Reconfiguration Task Group (SRTG), in line with the current language being used by the NHS.

Alison Knowles (AK) of Wiltshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) gave an update on the implementation plan for service reconfiguration in Wiltshire. There is a steering group which is a sub committee of the PCT Board which has a wide membership, including some stakeholders and other Trusts.

The SRTG will receive monthly updates on all the developments of the reconfiguration.

The PCT is focussing on putting the neighbourhood teams together, especially the consultation with and redeployment of staff. Physical bases for each team have been identified. Matching staff to jobs is going on and will be finished by the start of June with the aim of staff being trained and in post by 26 June and operational by 1 July.

The PCT is also hoping to develop a single point of access for referral into the neighbourhood teams so that professionals and patients/carers can all use the same system.

Inpatients will move from Devizes on 1 July as will maternity beds.

Communication has gone quiet due to the PCT focussing on work with staff rather than the public. There is now a communications plan, which can be made available. A series of professional guidance docs and leaflets are being produced to provide more information.

The Chairman invited the WCC Cabinet member for Community Services, John Thomson, to make comments.

JT said that the relationship between the PCT and WCC continued to improve, however the Council has some remaining concerns.

Community Services has invested £1.2m in finding 96 extra placements for people in hospital, but this only appears to have reduced the delayed transfer of care list by 12. There needs to be a whole system approach to address this problem as when patients are in acute centres they are often told by consultants they will have to go into a nursing home. Families and patients take this word as final and social services do not get an opportunity to carry

out a needs assessment for that individual to ensure they get the right kind of affordable care. This has to change if the system is ever to become sustainable and the Council needs the help of the PCT to do this.

The Council is also concerned about what happens in the home when people are nursed at home. In hospital all of a patient's needs are catered for, but what level of care will be provided at home? The Council needs a clearer understanding of this to work out its own costs and commitment.

AK agreed that a whole system approach is needed. There is a commissioning framework for the neighbourhood teams, which outlines what they will do, which is now being turned into protocols. The PCT is carrying out briefings with the acute staff to try to educate them about using the neighbourhood teams for discharges. It is crucial that the PCT and WCC work in partnership on this to ensure the whole system is changed.

The Chairman then invited Peter Biggs, Chairman of the Task Group, to comment.

PB said the Task Group is taking on the monitoring of all aspects of the implementation of service reconfiguration and will include how social care develops alongside NHS services within that.

The Task Group is setting a programme of meetings to happen two weeks after every PCT Steering Group and will continue to call witnesses when appropriate.

The Task Group is having a special meeting on 22 June to look at the neighbourhood teams in detail and both health and social care will participate in that.

Members were invited to enter the discussion and several points were raised.

Concern was expressed about the temporary closure of a ward in Trowbridge Hospital, which has been made due to staff shortages. It was stated that this type of action led to a further lack of trust in the PCT.

Other services, such as Supporting People, have not been included in discussions about new services so they do not know how they will fit in.

Members were also concerned that delayed transfers for care are still high and there was some discussion about the facilities that are available to the Council and the PCT.

AK confirmed that step down care will continue to be offered at community hospitals.

It was resolved that:

The Task Group would continue to monitor the implementation.

The PCTs communications plan would be circulated with the minutes.

23. Mainstreaming Mental Health

Malcolm Sinclair (MS) updated the Committee about the most recent decisions taken by the PCT regarding older peoples' mental health services.

The PCT has finally been able to move towards a county wide approach, but there is more work still to be done to ensure it's a whole systems approach.

The number of older people's beds has been agreed at 58, but the location has not yet been settled and Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP) is seeking an open and engaging discussion on this.

In Marlborough there will be a definite move from beds to community services, and this is supported by the clinicians working in the area.

AK agreed that the PCT was conscious that decisions needed to be taken and that it sees the making of these decisions as the beginning of the next stage. The voluntary sector is also seen as a crucial element of the overall service.

Paula Winchcombe (PW) who chairs the Task Group said she was glad mental health issues had been given a full airing by this Committee, but she was concerned about capacity following the benchmarking and the relatively low number of beds per head that the PCT had decided was needed compared to elsewhere in the region.

PW confirmed that the Task Group would continue to monitor progress and report to Committee when appropriate.

MS then updated the Committee regarding the SITU (industrial therapy) service in Salisbury which was included in the public consultation in South Wiltshire in 2005 and the recommendation was to recommission the service. However, this has not happened and the unit has now been closed

MS confirmed that a consultant will be working with WCC and the PCT to look at how day service provision for mental health service users is commissioned across the county as a matter of urgency.

MS also confirmed that neighbouring counties which currently have a high number of beds are all working towards reducing that number.

There was further debate which took in updates on changes to services for adults of working age, expansion of community services, use of evidence and the challenge of providing services to an ever growing population of dementia sufferers.

It was resolved that:

The first recommendation be changed to read "The Task Group is concerned and continues to monitor progress".

The Task Group would receive six monthly updates on commissioning of services.

The PCT and AWP would be asked for updates on the commissioning of an alternative service to SITU in Salisbury.

24. Alzheimer's Drugs

AK gave an update that stated that the PCT follows NICE guidance by prescribing the drugs in question to those with moderate Alzheimer's symptoms, but not to those in early stages as it has not been proven to work.

AK stated that the Chairman of the PCT was unhappy that this issue had been brought forward as a motion to full council, but members of the Committee replied that it is the right of any councillor to bring forward a motion, it is due procedure and it enables then the Health OSC to investigate the issue further.

The Committee agreed that the PCT was following NICE guidelines by only prescribing the drugs to those who met the criteria.

Under this item brief updates were also given by AK regarding Netheravon Surgery and Head and Neck Cancer from the last meeting.

Netheravon Surgery – the consultation document is being finalised and the three OSC members identified at the last meeting will be asked to look at it and make any final suggestions before the start of the consultation.

Head and Neck Cancer – work is ongoing. There is likely to be a minor change to upper gastro cancer services which will affect a very few Wiltshire residents.

An update was also received on Trowbridge hospital, where a ward has been closed temporarily due to staffing shortages. Other beds at Melksham, Warminster and Savernake will be opened to ensure that the overall number of beds is not affected. AK stated that the PCT was not happy about having to do this, but there was no other alternative at this time.

It was resolved that:

The OSC would find out what other PCTs do with regard to prescribing these drugs.

The Chairman would contact the Chairman of the PCT to discuss the process members use when submitting motions to Council.

When issues arise that are of interest to the Committee, but without having become items for the agenda, briefings will be made available to members.

25. Health Scrutiny Support Programme – Summary of Three Sessions

The Chairman introduced the item by saying that they had been worthwhile and had helped to re-align the Committee with the broader health issues.

It was resolved that:

The further research outlined in the report would be carried out.

The principles and actions described would be adhered to by the Committee.

26. Healthcare Commission Annual Healthcheck

Members received copies of each of the comments sent to the trusts by the OSC.

It was resolved that:

The recommendations in the report are adopted.

27. Great Western Ambulance Trust

Members who had attended the meeting on 3 April at Great Western Ambulance Trust gave verbal updates to the Committee.

There was a general discussion about the need for joint scrutiny over some of the Trust's issues.

Jill Tompkins of the RUH Patient & Public Involvement Forum explained that the Ambulance Trust Forum is carrying out a survey about ambulances stacking up at acute hospitals. Findings from the survey will be made available to the OSC in due course.

It was noted that, whatever plans the ambulance trust might have for the future, all its response times in Wiltshire are in the red.

16. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 19 July 2007.

(Duration of the meeting 10:30 – 12:45)

The officer who has produced these notes is Jo Howes, Health Scrutiny Officer within Democratic and Members' Services, direct line (01225) 713004; Email johowes@wiltshire.gov.uk