

Annual Healthcheck – 2006/07

Wiltshire Primary Care Trust

Members who worked on these comments:

John English, Wiltshire County Council
Eli Manasseh, West Wiltshire District Council

Comments on specific core standards

C1 The PCT has operated a recruitment freeze for a considerable length of time. This has caused staffing pressures and has made it necessary to make temporary changes to services to ensure clinical safety at times. The committee recognises that services need to be safe, but regrets that financial pressures have impacted in this manner.

C5 The PCT has embarked on a comprehensive service review which was designed to re-shape community services to ensure they are affordable, safe, modern and in line with NICE guidance, the National Service Frameworks and the White Papers for health.

During conversations with officers of the PCT, members were informed that different teams working within the PCT had different ideas about what constituted mandatory training. This is now being addressed.

C6 The relationship between the PCT and social services have been strained over the last twelve months, mainly as a result of financial pressures on both sides. Steps are now being taken by all those responsible to mend the relationship, work together and find ways to deliver services jointly. The Committee is pleased to see commitment to resolve difficult issues on both sides.

C7 Members have heard there have been problems with reporting on some of the standards and that, despite knowing that they are achieving some, they are unable to accurately report on them. The Committee is concerned about this situation and its impact on staff who must find the situation demoralising. Officers of the Trust have assured much is being done to rectify this and members will be seeking future updates on this matter.

The PCT has inherited financial deficits from each of the three PCTs that merged to form it. Steps are being taken to address severe overspends and deficits, but these have arisen from long years of poor management, inappropriate and costly services and these problems will not be solved overnight. The Committee has heard several regimes express an intention to resolve the financial situation, however members expect to see results from the current administration and will continue to ask for updates on progress.

C14 The PCT has a robust and effective PALS. Members have been able to refer individuals to the service with confidence. Complaints are investigated thoroughly and help is given to patients who are seeking resolutions.

General Comments on Wiltshire Primary Care Trust

The Committee recognises that the PCT is trying to address issues of equity across the county and hopes this will be easier to do now that there is one PCT for Wiltshire.

The Committee is concerned that, with the whole-scale changes that are being made to parts of the provider arm of the PCT, there will be a back-log in the training of new and existing staff to carry out different roles.

Members are very keen that the PCT should work with the County Council in the establishment of children's centres in order to ensure that a comprehensive set of services for children are offered at the same point of access.

The Committee has been concerned that there has been a lack of investment in public health, mainly due to the financial pressures. At the time of writing a substantive Director of Public Health for health and social care has not been appointed, and this is a concern.

Members have pointed out that Wiltshire is steadily becoming more multicultural and training of staff needs to take this into account.