

**WCC HEALTH OVERVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT
POINTS TO CONSIDER - 20TH NOVEMBER 2008**

1. As the Chairman correctly states, the HOSC did not approve the PCT's programme of change. This needs to be emphasised because this has been used to underline the PCT case, on a number of occasions. The recognition that the PCT unsustainable was related to huge debts which have now been cleared.
2. I wish to emphasise the statement made by the Task Group in March expressing the wish that negotiations would take place between GPs and the PCT to include Minor Injury Services. This aspiration of March 2007 needs to be emphasised in view of the abysmal lack of any real meaningful negotiation between the PCT and GPs to date

This is clear from the honest replies received from the doctors:-

Spa Medical Centre: *“ PCT not seeking to commission any service. If the situation were to change and if the PCT did seek to commission such a service we would undoubtedly be interested”*

St Damians: *“The Practice would only be able to consider a proposal made to it by the PCT ... to specify what level of service is required, times... reimbursement”*

Giffords *“It is impossible for the practice to comment or even contemplate providing a service without seeking a contract or knowing what funding would be available, to determine if it was a viable option”.*

Question: How can PCT have claimed to have the “ear” of the doctors, as at a recent Board Meeting, when they have not even had the courtesy to let them know the rudiments of an Enhanced Contract. The doctors clearly have been kept well and truly in the dark re the option to run a MI service from a local surgery.

3. The Report mentions apparent lack of information about PALS. The Parish Council; a body which represents some 7,000 residents has only received one communication in the last 2 years – no posters, no updates
4. Letter to Roy While from Wiltshire PCT 29 August mentions the HOSC need to keep in mind equity for the people of Wiltshire as a whole. May I respectfully say so does the PCT!!! Why is Malmesbury with a population one third the size of Melksham, for example getting a new Primary Care Centre, while Melksham is ignored? Melksham is asking for a First Aid Centre, the other areas are not. There has to be some flexibility to meet the specific needs of individual areas.
5. Reference to structure of engagement and consultation process. Unfortunately people in Melksham were told there was an option to have a new hospital at Melksham. People were very confused because they believed the “Pathways for Change” exercise was the consultation. We were recently told by PCT that it was not, and real consultation exercise was later. By then people in Melksham had switched off. It was very confusing for the majority of people.
6. With respect, how can MIU geographical access be judged against a standard for access to urgent dental care?!! There is no comparison. The main ingredient when urgent dental care is needed is pain which can be relieved by an analgesic Minor Injury is much more complex. – a child falls down the stairs – not just pain, but blood, cuts, loss of consciousness, fear. Complications of other children in a family. There is no quick relief. 15 mile maximum travel distance is much too far – an unacceptable standard in today's Britain. There should be a First Aid Post in every community area.

7. MIU user statistics. When there was a MIU in Melksham – around 107 patients each week. Now, even with slight rise in last six months to 85 per week, that's still a drop of 21% or 1/5th. Who is treating the missing 1/5th? We understand it is the chemists or people are self-treating because of the hassle and time to get to Chippenham or Trowbridge. Journeys in day often take at least 30 minutes, due to congestion.
8. The Petition Progress: As a Parish Council, we were not aware of PCT wanting to meet us, or the cancellation of the Area Forum. It took a tremendous effort on the part of the PC Chairman to secure a Meeting with PCT and we were then kept waiting for at least 20 minutes.

The Chief Executive attended the Town Council Meeting in March, not the PCT Board and the Petition was addressed to the PCT as a whole. Mr James was informed at that Meeting we wished to present the Petition to the next PCT Board Meeting in April – one month later. When we did present it in April we were not even permitted to speak to even tell the Board what the Petition said!!

9. HOSC Q1 Cost of implementing an enhanced GP Contract in Melksham. The answer given is cursory and inadequate. It is clear that no proper research has been done. The likely benchmark of £56 is just a starting point towards giving an adequate answer to the HOSC question. There is dedicated clinical space available in the hospital. The PCT should be giving the Committee details of where this is and numbers of trained staff etc. The doctors indeed do need to understand the specification and as long as PCT keeps them in the dark about the contract details, they obviously cannot make any rational judgement.

HOSC Q2 Transport Plans for access: The answer given is inadequate. Since it is the PCT which has closed down easily accessible services in Melksham, not the local authorities, it should be the PCT, not local government which ensures local people can reach substitute services. No direct bus route to Trowbridge. At least 15% population do not have access to cars and there will be more as the recession bites since families are now having to make do with either one car or none at all. The Government's recognition of need for "care closer to home" is meaningless when the exact opposite has happened. Melksham residents need easy transport now. Should they call 999? This part of the question has not been answered. Most people do not wish to exacerbate the problems of the ambulance service and some will not ring 999 even if this is detrimental to their own health.

Summary: In view of the overwhelming community support for having a First Aid Station/ Minor Injury Centre in Melksham please would the HOSC ask Wiltshire PCT to carry out the necessary research and give Melksham doctors the information they need re contracts in order to be able to make an informed decision. They should be encouraged in every possible way to provide the town with the services it so desperately needs.

Mary Jarvis 20th November 2008