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5 - NOV 2009

## **Guildhall Walk Healthcare Centre**

27 Guildhall Walk  
Portsmouth  
Hants  
PO1 2DD

Dr Charles Lewis Medical Director  
Dr Ruhin Karim  
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Telephone Number 02392 751006

Councillor David Horne  
Chairman, Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2009

Dear Councillor Horne,

Thank you for your letter dated the 27<sup>th</sup> August 2009 with reference to the letters you have received from Practices in the Portsmouth area. We have undertaken a thorough investigation into the concerns they have expressed.

As I'm sure you are aware the Guildhall Walk Healthcare Centre was set up as an Equitable Access Centre – (recommended by Lord Darzi's review, for there to be a minimum of one within each PCT); with the key aim of improving access for both patients without a GP and those requiring a consultation outside of standard GP working hours.

The centre opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> August and we have registered 643 and seen 3,494 walk-in patients as at 23<sup>rd</sup> October

Unfortunately some of the information that you have been presented with is both incorrect and mis-leading. However, in response to some of the concerns raised relating in particular to the promotion of the service to patients we have modified our communication in liaison with Debbie Tarrant, Director of Primary Care at Portsmouth PCT.

I have responded to each of the points raised in your letter with regard to the promotion of our services. The purpose of this communication, in line with the underlying philosophy of Equitable Access centres is to ensure that unregistered patients and the "hard-to-reach" patients are given maximum opportunity to find out about our services. Gaining public awareness amongst these groups in particular is a key objective for our clinical team. Many organisations in both the public and private sector were approached as part of our communications strategy. This resulted in the following actions:

- 1) Flyers included with school reports: we engaged with the local schools to inform them of the opening. In one instance the Head Teacher requested some leaflets. The Head Teacher acted on their own initiative to distribute these leaflets with the school reports.
- 2) House to House delivery: we have not undertaken any house to house delivery of leaflets nor have we sanctioned another organisation to undertake this activity on our behalf.
- 3) Emails to Portsmouth City Council employees: as mentioned we did approach large organisations to inform them of the centre opening. Portsmouth Council did not and would not supply us with the e-mail addresses of their staff. Any emails that were sent would have been generated internally, by a Portsmouth City staff member who presumably considered that they were benefiting staff by informing them of a drop in health care facility, near to their place of work, thereby reducing the need for them to take time off to visit their GP during working hours for example.
- 4) Private Gyms: as part of the promotion of the centre we left information about hour health services with a range of local businesses.
- 5) Advertisements in the local newspaper – The News: an article which went to press on the 29<sup>th</sup> July which was put together collaboratively by Portsmouth Health Limited and Portsmouth PCT's communications team. Mark Wingham from the PCT lead on the article and the Health Editor, Clare Semke, interviewed some of the clinical team.

Communication about the health centre has been funded solely by Portsmouth Health Limited. The promotional materials used have all been pre-approved by the PCT.

In your letter you also state that we have strayed from our original remit. The original remit is to improve access to healthcare for the residents of Portsmouth, in particular to target and register vulnerable groups such as drug users and the homeless, and to improve access at times when traditional practices are closed (1200-1600 & 1800-2000).

The walk-in element of the service has been very well supported by local practices. Demonstrated at the September Practice Managers' committee where they heard that 9 out of 15 practices had referred their patients to the Guildhall Walk Centre. We very much view the centre as being an integral part of the local health economy, releasing pressure on other facilities such as A&E where patient might otherwise attend when their GP Practice is closed.

I hope this letter has answered the concerns you raised; I would be delighted to attend the meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> November to talk through some of the issues raised.

Yours Sincerely

*R. Dowsett P.C. - General Manager*

Ross Dowsett  
General Manager – South West

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28<sup>th</sup> October, 2009

Councillor David Horne  
Chairman, Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel  
Democratic and Community Engagement  
Portsmouth City Council  
Civic Offices  
PORTSMOUTH  
PO1 2AL

Dear Councillor Horne

**Re: Guildhall Walk Healthcare Centre**

Further to your letter of 27<sup>th</sup> August notifying the PCT that issues in relation to the Guildhall Walk Healthcare Centre would be tabled at the Panel's meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November, please find enclosed the following documents:

- Code of Practice for the promotion of NHS-funded services
- Marketing & Communications Strategy prepared by Portsmouth Health Ltd
- Section 80: Advertising and NHS Branding of the contract for Equitable Access to Primary Medical Services

We would like to assure the Panel that as part of contract agreement, the PCT worked very closely with Portsmouth Health Limited to ensure that the focus of the Healthcare Centre is to provide services to patients who do not normally engage with health care services.

The PCT has responded individually to practices as they have raised concerns. We have always had an agreement with Portsmouth Health that they would not put anything in the Press or send out documents without the prior approval of the PCT. We have ensured that this should not happen again. Unfortunately, as certain functions such as recruitment are handled centrally, one or two were sent out without reference to the PCT.

We are also aware of practices' concerns about patients being directed to the Guildhall Walk Healthcare Centre by either the GP Out of Hours services or St Mary's Treatment Centre, and the PCT is clearly anxious to avoid any double funding of patient care which may occur as a result. To this end we have established clear ground rules with both organisations and have been clear that patients should always

be directed back to their registered practices whenever practicable. In certain circumstances this will not be the case and obviously we have to allow for patient choice.

The PCT is aware that Portsmouth Health is collecting statistics and that they have been working with patients who have not previously registered with practices in the area. We hope Dr Lewis's presentation on the 18<sup>th</sup> November will demonstrate this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracy Sanders', written in a cursive style.

Tracy Sanders

**Chief Executive**

tracy.sanders@ports.nhs.uk