

HEALTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel held in the Guildhall on Thursday 4 March 2010 at 2pm.

Present

Councillors David Horne
Margaret Adair
David Stephen Butler
Margaret Foster
Jacqui Hancock
Robin Sparshatt

Co-opted Members

Peter Edgar, Hants County Council
Vicki Weston, Winchester City Council.

Also in Attendance

Portsmouth Hospitals Trust (PHT).

Tim Robinson, Head of Public and Patient Involvement.
Simon Mullett, Consultant in Emergency Medicine.
Debbie Zimmerman, Operational Manager.

Portsmouth City Council/ PCT.

Dr Paul Edmondson-Jones, Joint Director of Public Health.

South Central Ambulance Service.

John Divall, Director of Corporate Affairs.

The following documents were tabled at the meeting:

- Street Pastors information.
- Street Pastors Newsletters: June 2009; October 2009 and February 2010.
- Street Pastors' observers' agreement.
- Fair Society, Healthy Lives (Marmott Review) – summary.
- Care Quality Commission's Voices into Action – February 2010.
- Letter from the Department for Health dated 14 January 2010 setting out how quality accounts should be managed between Acute Trusts, LINKs and Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- Debbie Tarrant, Primary Care Trust's email regarding the plans for the artefacts from the chapel currently at St Mary's Healthcare Campus.
- Gail Warnes, Salisbury NHS' email dated 16 February regarding the proposed changes to the burns services from April 2010.
- List of work shadowing opportunities and visits proposed for the Panel.

8 Welcome, Membership and Any Apologies for Absence (AI 1).

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Councillors Dorothy Denston and David Gillett had sent their apologies.

9 Declarations of Interest (AI 2).

Councillor Peter Edgar declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest as he has shares in a business that does work for the NHS.

10 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 18 November 2009 (AI 3).

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel held on 20 January 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising.

Councillor Butler informed the Panel that he had received an email from the PCT assuring him that the chapel artefacts currently at St Mary's Healthcare campus would be recycled and reused at hospitals and other suitable venues. He was satisfied with those plans.

Councillor Edgar observed that although the Gosport War Memorial Hospital had opened recently, the opening hours at its minor injuries clinic had been reduced temporarily. A number of people had contacted him concerned about the affect that this would have on attendances at Queen Alexandra Hospital. He asked that the opening hours be restored as soon as possible.

The Chair informed the Panel that Ross Dowsett had told him that the breakdown of patients attending the Guildhall Walk Healthcare Centre according to ward wasn't kept at the Centre but that he would contact the PCT to see if they have some data that he could use. As soon as it is available this will be sent to the Panel.

11 Update on Items Previously Considered by the Panel (AI 4).

Impact of Severe Weather on Queen Alexandra Hospital.

Tim Robinson, Head of Public and Patient Involvement presented his report that was circulated at the meeting. During the presentation, he clarified the following points:

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Ezeq ambulance is used to take many patients to and from the hospital.

Hospital staff had done an excellent job in difficult circumstances.

Lessons had been learnt from the experience and subsequent measures had already been put in place. One example of this is the store of spare clothes for staff who could not get home.

The Panel made the following comments:

The rise in admissions during this period was not as sharp as was expected, with approximately 30 people at the highest peak.

Reports in the media has shown many incidents of staff and volunteers' heroics and working together to keep Queen Alexandra running and the dedication of staff was fantastic.

Hampshire County Council is concerned that the ambulance service is the NHS lead during a major incident and not the hospital. It feels that it is essential that the service have a seat on the Gold Command Emergencies Team.

12 **Scrutiny Reviews (AI 5).**

Alcohol-Related Hospital Admissions.

The Chair asked the Panel to consider the list of work shadowing opportunities and visits and state which of these they could attend.

Councillor Sparshatt indicated that he would be available for work shadowing in June.

The work shadowing of the Street Pastors in March.

Councillor Butler was available on 12, 13 and 20th March.

Councillors Edgar and Weston will contact the Scrutiny Support Officer to give their availability for March.

Councillor Adair is available on any of the dates proposed.

The Panel was also informed that the following opportunities would also be available:

- To accompany an ambulance crew on a Friday/ Saturday night in June.
- To observe the ambulance control room in Otterbourne

Dr Paul Edmondson-Jones, Joint Director of Public Health gave an overview of alcohol use in the UK and in Portsmouth. During the presentation, the following points were raised:

(TAKE IN PRESENTATION)

The statistics showing the health risks associated with drinking have been adjusted to take into account that regular drinkers are more likely to smoke and lead unhealthy lifestyles. Therefore they show only the affect that drinking has on their health.

The increase in liver disease is almost wholly attributable to the rise in alcohol consumption.

It is the amount of alcohol consumed that has increased over the last 30 years and not the number of people drinking.

Despite the higher taxes, beer is nearly twice as affordable now than in 1970.

The Save Dave Campaign is aimed at men aged 35 and over who account for 60% of alcohol related hospital admissions. The campaign encourages people to seek help for their alcohol misuse and also friends and family of heavy drinkers to encourage them to seek help. Thirty five years ago Dave was the most common name for boys and it rhymed with save and so was chosen for the campaign.

The city of Portsmouth only makes up one third of the catchment area for Queen Alexandra Hospital.

People suffering from the effects of binge drinking make up the majority of alcohol-related admissions at the A&E department, whereas in the rest of the hospital, patients are suffering from diseases due to chronic drinking.

Male and female students in Portsmouth drink more units of alcohol than those in Southampton (22:16 units compared to 20:13).

The rate of alcohol related hospital admissions is increasing nationally by 7% each year. The rate is much higher in Portsmouth but tends to increase by a similar amount each year. The aim of the Portsmouth Alcohol Strategy is to stop the rate increasing so that it falls beneath the national average and becomes level with the South East average.

In response to questions from the Panel, the following points were clarified:

Street Pastors engage with vulnerable people in the streets at night and also clear glass bottles that have been discarded by people before they go into nightclubs. They have had a significant impact on reducing the number of people spending the night in cells or at QA Hospital.

The 7% annual increase in alcohol related hospital admissions nationally and in Portsmouth is irrespective of any changes in licensing laws. However, some areas of the city might have seen an increase in antisocial behaviour as a result of the extended opening hours for pubs and clubs. In his opinion, the jury is out on whether this extension has had a positive or negative affect on antisocial behaviour and health.

The demand for rehabilitation has increased probably as a result of better highlighting of alcohol related issues and easier access to treatment services.

There are various ways of getting involved with schools in order to raise awareness of alcohol misuse. At the moment, head teachers of secondary schools are focusing on childhood obesity and teenage pregnancies. Increasingly younger people are getting involved in risk taking behaviour e.g. drug taking, smoking, having unprotected sex and binge drinking. A national campaign should be launched to encourage parents to talk to their children early on in life about responsible drinking.

A culture change is required to change people's attitude to drinking; otherwise interventions cannot work in the long term.

The University of Portsmouth is one of the top 50 in the country and is oversubscribed. Until recently it boasted in its prospectus that the city has more pubs per square mile than anywhere else.

Enforcement of alcohol related laws is carried out locally for underage sales and drinking in public places.

In his opinion, the introduction of minimum pricing per alcohol unit would go a long way to tackle alcohol misuse. Manchester is considering introducing such a byelaw in its city. This would be possible, as proved by Liverpool City Council, which introduced byelaws to ban smoking in public places before nationally legislation was passed.

The Panel made the following observations:

Much valuable work in Portsmouth is being carried out in order to tackle this problem. However, it is not alone with this problem.

It is concerning that many people are getting drunk before they go out.

There is a need to introduce alcohol awareness programmes in junior schools.

It is concerning that traders, who have had their licences revoked because of underage selling, can continue selling alcohol until the appeal date.

It is possible that the high prices in places such as Gunwharf encourage people to drink large quantities of cheap alcohol before going out.

Simon Mullett, Consultant in Emergency Medicine and Debbie Zimmerman, Operational Manager at Queen Alexandra Hospital gave a presentation which analysed alcohol related hospital admissions. During the presentation, the following points were raised:

(TAKE IN PRESENTATION)

The opening hours at the minor injuries unit at Gosport War Memorial Hospital will return to normal in April.

Staff at the A&E department do not judge patients.

It is difficult to record the number of admissions that are alcohol related as often the condition being presented is recorded without reference to the cause.

The Paddington Alcohol Test is used to flag up issues so that patients can be directed to the appropriate services. A copy of this will be made available to the Panel.

Intoxicated people regularly climb and then fall off the two stone lions at the top of the Guildhall steps sometimes resulting in serious injuries and even death. Mr Mullett suggested that the Council could cordon them off to prevent access. The Chair responded that Councillors had considered installing safety measures there in the past.

Some heavy drinkers attend the A&E department every night with injuries related to alcohol.

It is not possible for staff to refer patients to alcohol treatment services, but it is often hard for people with chaotic lives to refer themselves.

Many drunk patients are abusive to staff, most of which is directed at the receptionists and nurses. Dealing with them diverts resources away from other patients' needs. However, the introduction of security staff in the A&E department on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights has reduced the number of abusive incidents.

In response to questions from the Panel, the following points were clarified:

The hospital carries out surveys to identify which pubs drunk patients had visited prior to attending A&E. The results of this however have not proved very useful as often the patient arrived at the pub already in a state of inebriation.

When told of their abusive behaviour the night before, some patients are ashamed but most are unrepentant.

It would not be possible to introduce fines or other punishment for alcohol related conditions or abusive drunk patients.

Brief Interventions are carried out at the moment of admission to hospital or to a prison cell to make people aware of the damage that they are doing to themselves and others.

The Panel made the following comments:

The amount of abusive behaviour that the staff at the A&E department deal with is shocking and more should be done to raise the public's awareness of this problem e.g. showing typical incidents on the big screen in Guildhall Square.

Many cities have similar economic and social problems as Portsmouth but do not have such a serious problem with alcohol misuse.

Photographs of diseased livers could be shown on bottles and cans of alcohol to promote responsible drinking.

RESOLVED that the presentations be noted and that a breakdown of alcohol consumption by ward be sent to the Panel.

13 Possible Substantial Changes to Services, Quarterly Letters and Annual Reports (AI 6).

(i) South Central Ambulance Service.

John Divall, Director of Corporate Affairs introduced South Central Ambulance Service's stakeholder letter. During his presentation, the following points were highlighted:

(TAKE IN LETTER)

Portsea Ambulance Station is back on the market and discussion is continuing with the Council about the site in light of the Hard development.

Signposting to the appropriate service is essential.

On the telephone, careful questioning can establish whether the sending of an ambulance is the most appropriate course of action for a patient.

Sometimes a responder will attend to assess the situation and to decide if an ambulance is required.

RESOLVED that the Stakeholder Letter be noted and that the location of the ambulance primary stand points in the city be sent to the Panel.

(ii) Service Improvement Proposal for Burn Care Services for Adults and Children.

The Chair summarised the service improvement proposals set out by South West Specialised Commissioning Group. He reminded the Panel that Councillor Butler had visited one of the burns units.

RESOLVED that the proposals be noted.

Meeting with the Chief Executive, PHT.

The Chair informed the Panel that this would be held on 15 April at 11am.

RESOLVED that the issue of directional signage at Queen Alexandra Hospital be put on the agenda.

Funding for Carers.

The Chair informed the Panel that he had written to the Portsmouth City Primary Care Trust for a breakdown of how it spent the money allocated last year for the provision for carers. The response from Tracy Sanders, Chief Executive, which was circulated with the agenda, explained that the budgets for 2010/11 had not yet been finalised. A breakdown for both 2009-10 and 2010-11 would be requested.

- 14 Date of Next Meeting (AI 7.**
10 June 2010.

The meeting closed at 16:15.