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14th September, 2010

Councillor L Stagg
Chair, Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Portsmouth City Council
Guildhall Square
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Dear Councillor Stagg

Quarterly Update September 2010

There are three issues on which I wish to up-date members this quarter and a further three issues which I wish to bring to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel's attention. These are set out below.

Sustainability Plan for the Local NHS

Following my presentation to the Panel at its last meeting, work to develop the sustainability plan and to inform stakeholders of its contents has continued. The plan has been discussed by the Boards of both NHS Portsmouth and NHS Hampshire and briefing meetings have been held with the area's MPs and with key representatives from the voluntary and charitable sectors. A copy of the plan has been placed on the PCT's website (<http://www.portsmouth.nhs.uk/Join-In/Consultations/Sustainability.htm>) and comments are invited on the plan and issues it seeks to tackle. Work has also continued across south east Hampshire as a whole on securing clinical

and other stakeholder input and, specifically, on means to improve productivity, make better use of buildings and the estate, focus on clinical effectiveness and secure the right balance between hospital and community services. Work to review clinical thresholds has also been carried out and it is hoped that the Panel will receive an update on this at its next meeting from Dr Paul Edmondson-Jones, Director of Public Health and Primary Care.

Commissioning of Wheelchair Services

The PCT, in conjunction with NHS Hampshire, has reviewed the options for a formal procurement process to re-commission this service. This review has shown that the wheelchair service, currently provided by Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, is part of a block contract with prosthetics and orthotics services. As a result it is not possible to break down the exact spend on each service. This means there is insufficient robust finance and activity baseline information that will allow the successful tender of the service. There is also an unacceptable waiting list, going back in some case to two years, which presents a level of urgency to resolve.

Options to address immediate concerns have therefore been considered and a resolution is being taken forward. This is with Solent Healthcare which currently provides a wheelchair service in Southampton and physiotherapy and equipment services in Portsmouth.

As an organisation with a proven track record with Portsmouth's physiotherapy equipment services the decision has been made by the PCT's Clinical Executive Committee to temporarily add the wheelchair service to the Solent Healthcare contract. This is with a view to clearing the backlog and establish robust finance and activity baselines. In addition, the PCT has asked Solent Healthcare to provide wheelchairs on an 18-week pathway. That is, to provide a service that is in line with an 18-week referral to treatment waiting time. This will then enable the PCT to establish how much demand there may be for a new service and how many new assessments may have to take place when the new provider takes over the service in the New Year.

It is not known at this stage how long this work will take Solent Healthcare. However, options for tendering the service will be re-visited as soon as the PCT has the financial and activity baseline information needed in order to undertake this exercise and an eighteen-week pathway is in place. The PCT's commissioners are keeping service users up-to-date through the Frank Sorrell Centre and by attendance at the Disablement Services Centre's Moving

Forward group. The first “Frequently Asked Questions” sheet has been issued to service users. In addition, the Chairman of Moving Forward is attending the PCT’s monthly Wheelchair Transfer Group.

St Mary’s NHS Treatment Centre

In November 2009 the PCT informed the Panel that it had conducted engagement of patients and the public in relation to care closer to home. This was to inform the future of St Mary’s NHS Treatment Centre. This work augmented the information provided by regular feedback on the range of services provided at the Treatment Centre. It included feedback from GPs at annual practice visits undertaken by the PCT, and patient satisfaction reports collated monthly by the current provider, Care UK.

Feedback has been considered along side the proposed commissioning intentions with due consideration to the economic and financial climate both currently and forecast. The result is that in addition to the current range of services commissioned from the Treatment Centre, it is proposed to extend the diabetic retinopathy services to deliver effective screening and treatment across the entire service pathway.

To enable an open and full procurement of a desired standard for a new provider when the current contract expires in December 2010, an extension of seven months has been granted to Care UK to continue providing services at the Treatment Centre until June 2010.

In addition, a Project Board has been established, chaired by a non executive director who is also Chair of the Community Hospital Development Project Board. Membership of the Board also includes senior representatives from Public Health, commissioning, finance, strategic projects, communications, a GP, NHS Hampshire and the Strategic Health Authority. The Project Board is tasked with overseeing progress of the project, approving decisions and signing off key milestones. It should be noted that the procurement process will be overseen by the Department of Health, with Department of Health approval required at specified project gateways.

Treatment of Hepatitis C

A Health Needs Assessment carried out across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight in 2009 showed that a significant number of Portsmouth residents had to go to Southampton for Treatment. Therefore, a commissioning intention

has been developed to provide a treatment service for Hepatitis C in Portsmouth.

Consultation has been carried out with stakeholders including drug service users, providers and commissioners, the prison service, Guildhall Walk-In Centre, Genito-Urinary Medicine and Virology Departments at Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, the Health Protection Unit, hepatology services at Southampton and Portsmouth Hospitals and Public Health Commissioners.

To inform the service specification consultation with potential service users from Portsmouth Users Self Help (PUSH) has been conducted through two meetings. These were held in April and June 2010 and key characteristics of a positive service identified. These include service information, appointments, staff attributes, waiting areas, clinical service and other support needed. The information collated has been fed back to those consulted and service users will be asked to comment on the draft specification when this is available.

Autism Pathway

During 2010/11 the PCT/City Council Integrated Commissioning Team is taking forward work in relation to the diagnosis, assessment and treatment of adults with autism. This is linked to the Government's work in relation to adults in England with autism. In March 2010 the Department of Health Launched "Fulfilling and rewarding lives: the strategy for adults with autism in England". This has been circulated to stakeholders in the city including: Mary Rose Special School, family carers, Highbury College (a service provider to young people with autistic spectrum disorder), Portsmouth Disability Forum, Portsmouth Autism Support Network, Pirates Group (service users), Learning Disabilities Partnership Board and Local Authority Education Department and Children's Services.

Thirty-five people attended a consultation event in July 2010 at which workshop groups were asked a range of questions relating to awareness training, diagnosis, assessment and treatment, experience of services and transition arrangements for young people. The information gathered is informing the Terms of Reference for a newly created Board for Autism and a document outlining the Board's aims, goals and work plan for implementing the Autism Strategy.

The Board for Autism will have close links with the Autism Board for Hampshire through which NHS organisations and the City Council will be co-

ordinating strategy development with regional partners. Fifty-per cent of the Board's membership aspires to be of people with autism and family carers. Other members will include statutory and third sector partners that can link effectively to other boards such as the Learning Disability Partnership Board and Integrated Commissioning Board to ensure they take appropriate action to implement the strategy.

Personal Health Budgets

The PCT/City Council Integrated Commissioning Team has sought formal pilot status from the Department of Health to take forward personal health budgets. To do this a self assessment was undertaken to include engagement with NHS and Social Care staff, mental health service users, people receiving end of life care and those receiving any continuing health care and their family carers and organisations that provide services to these groups of people.

This work is now being taken forward and a regional project manager identified. A communications and stakeholder management work stream will take forward the engagement aspect of the project, and consultation will be undertaken with users, carers and providers and within the NHS and City Council.

I hope this provides a useful update.

Yours sincerely



Rob Dalton
Director of Corporate and Support Services