HEALTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel held in the Guildhall, Portsmouth on Tuesday 12 December 2006 at 3pm.

Present

Councillors David Stephen Butler (Chairman)
Lee Mason
Margaret Foster
Jacqui Hancock
David Horne

Co-opted Members

Councillor Vicky Weston - Winchester City Council
Councillor Peter Edgar - Gosport Borough Council
Councillor Gwen Blackett - Havant Borough Council

Also in Attendance

Sue Harriman - Nurse Consultant Infection Control, Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust
Martin Dorey - Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust
Loretta Kinsella - Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Dorothy Denston - East Hants District Council
Councillor April Windebank - Portsmouth City Council
Keith White - Portsmouth Hospital NHS Trust Patient & Public Involvement Forum.
Maureen Silk - Chair, Portsmouth City Teaching PCT Patient & Public Involvement Forum.

71. Welcome (AI 1).

A warm welcome was extended to the representatives from Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, and the Portsmouth City Teaching PCT Patient and Public Involvement Forum and the Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust Patient and Public Involvement Forum.

72. Declaration of Members’ Interests (AI 2).

Councillor Peter Edgar – a taxi proprietor.
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 25 October and 1 November 2006 were correct records subject to the adding of John McLees in the attendance list for the November meeting.

The Panel was concerned to note that no response had been received to the questions asked of the South Central Ambulance NHS Trust on 20 September 2006. Councillor Lee Mason agreed to follow up this matter at the South Central Ambulance Patient and Public Involvement Forum (Hampshire Region) meeting on 13 December.

Cleanliness and Infection Control in Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust (AI 4).

At a meeting on 25 October 2006 the Panel received an update on the measures being undertaken by Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust to address the issue of cleanliness and infection control. The Portsmouth City Patent and Public Involvement Forum (PPIF) also expressed concerns following their unannounced visit at three Trust’s sites as raised at the meeting on 25 October.

A response from Gail Byrne, Director of Clinical Services, Nursing & Midwifery, Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust outlining the actions the Trust was taking to address these concerns along with a copy of the Trust’s response to the PPIF was circulated to the Panel.

Sue Harriman, Nurse Consultant Infection Control, Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, Martin Dorey and Loretta Kinsella, Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust were invited to explain the actions the Trust is proposing to take in response to the PPIF’s findings.

- One of the concerns raised by the PPIF was the absence of or inadequate signage on the doors to rooms for patients with infectious conditions. The Panel was informed that a nurse has recently been employed to carry out a review of all the issues surrounding the use of side rooms, including the condition of the rooms and usage and length of stay. Three weeks into the review, it has been noted that the transfer of patients to the main wards once they are free from infection, is not as quick as it could be.

- The Trust is currently conducting a review into signage and examples of the two proposed new coloured signs for doors to restricted access rooms were circulated to the Panel. Members were pleased to note that these use clear diagrams and simple instructions in lower case type. Ms. Harriman explained that it is important that patients isolated in this way do not feel stigmatised.
The Patient and Environment Inspection Action Team at the Trust carries out a series of independent audits on a regular basis and has identified no areas of concern and a very good general level of cleanliness across the Trust’s hospital sites.

The Trust carries out a number of internal audits and these have identified the storage of materials as an area needing to be addressed. A ‘De-Clutter’ Campaign is currently underway and work has begun to standardise the process for use of equipment. All the windows are due to be renewed in the near future and the opportunity will be taken to review the storage of materials.

Staff are regularly reminded that infection control is the responsibility of all visitors, staff and patients. Small things do make a difference, e.g. asking visitors to wash their hands and not to sit on beds.

Infection control standards against which the PHTs performance is measured have changed in last twelve months. New infection control data will be published shortly, once the Trust has provided the necessary evidence to show compliance with the new criteria.

A review of the Trust’s dress code for staff is currently underway. This will include jewellery, hair and cleanliness and will apply to all levels of staff. Staff are not allowed to wear their uniforms on the way to or from work, however some do ignore this rule, but if they are identified they will be disciplined. Currently, staff can take their uniforms home to wash themselves, or use the laundry service at the hospital. At the new hospital on the Queen Alexandra site, staff will be required to use this service and not take uniforms home.

An assessment of the root cause of every incidence of MRSA infection is carried out immediately after a case is identified.

There have been 40 cases of infection this financial year, which is online with the target of a maximum of 62 cases by end of February 2007.

It is important to publicise the good work that the PHT is carrying out to raise the public’s perception of the cleanliness at the hospital.

An important part of the infection control measures is ensuring that visitors use the sterilising gel that is available at strategic points within the hospital. The signage does give directions to the nearest sink too, for people who prefer to wash their hands instead of using the gel.

The Trust has very good contact with the Department of Health and also other trusts in order to share best practice.

Although it is prohibited, some patients choose to go outside for a cigarette and sometimes bring hospital equipment with them. The risk of infection in this case is considered to be very small or non-existent.
Mr Jock McLee, representing the Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust Patient Involvement Forum informed the Panel that the PPIF have made regular visits to the hospital and are normally very impressed. This visit has been the only occasion the PPIF representation were very disappointed with conditions. He believes that the necessary policy and procedures are in place, but that it is difficult to ensure all being executed in a consistent manner. When he expressed the PPIF’s concerns about infection control at the Portsmouth Hospital Trust Board Meeting on 30 November, he was pleased to note that the Board has confirmed that effective procedures are in place.

The Chair thanked the representatives from the Hospital Trust for providing the Panel with this update and reminded them that a further update is due to be received by the Panel in March 2007.

The Panel then agreed that the Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust PPIF be invited to report the findings from any future visits in due course.

75 Proposals Received from the local NHS to vary or develop local services (AI 5).

The Panel received a report from the Scrutiny Support Manager on proposals to vary or develop local health services that had been received from the local NHS. The report also updated the Panel on the progress of issues previously reported.

RESOLVED that:

1. Officers liaise with Portsmouth City Teaching PCT on how the proposed service developments in Community Nursing Services, Older People’s Mental Health Services and the provision of Community Loan Equipment will be taken through the scrutiny process.
2. An update report on the provision of maternity services in Portsmouth and SE Hampshire be taken to the Portsmouth, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Maternity) in due course.
3. The Panel note the letter received from Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust regarding the Isolation Facilities at Queen Alexandra Hospital and receive an update on this issue at a future meeting.
4. Officers liaise with Portsmouth City Teaching PCT regarding the development of a new model for older people’s services.
5. The Panel receive an update on progress of the proposed integration of Learning Disability Services prior to a formal scrutiny process being agreed.
6. The Panel receive an update at a future meeting on the progress made by the local health community to introduce new Primary Care Premises in the city.
76 **Thames Valley and Hampshire Regional Meeting (AI 6).**

The Chair and Vice Chair updated the Panel on the inaugural meeting of the South Central Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Network meeting, which they attended on 8 November. The Panel heard that the meeting was very interesting and it was useful to meet other members of the network. The Panel was also informed that this forum has sought funding by the Centre for Public Scrutiny and that the new Chief Executive of the South Central Strategic Health Authority plans to attend future meetings, which will be held three times a year.

77 **The Date of the Next Meeting (AI 7).**

Monday 29 January 2007 at 3pm.

The meeting closed at 4pm.