

Report to: **East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)**

Date: **16th June 2008**

By: **Director of Law and Personnel**

Title of report: **Equitable access to primary care**

Purpose of report: **To summarise plans for new GP-led health centre services in Eastbourne and Hastings and extended opening hours at GP practices across East Sussex**

RECOMMENDATIONS

HOSC is recommended to:

1. **Note the status of the procurement of GP-led health centres by East Sussex Downs and Weald and Hastings and Rother PCTs.**
 2. **Consider and comment on the development of the health centres in Eastbourne and Hastings.**
 3. **Decide HOSC's future involvement (if any) in the procurement process on the health centres.**
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1. Background

1.1 Lord Darzi, in his *Interim Report of August 2007 (Next Stage Review of the NHS)* gave a commitment to establishing at least 150 GP-led health-centres providing access to GP services on an 8am - 8pm, 7 days a week basis. Each health centre is to provide both bookable appointments (for registered and non-registered patients), and a walk-in facility. The health centres are part of a wider national programme of improving access to primary medical services, which also include opening at least 100 new GP practices and extending GP practice opening hours.

1.2 Local PCTs have the responsibility for procuring the new health centre through a process of competitive tending using the Alternative Provider Medical Services (APMS) contract that has been developed nationally. The contract is to be offered for an initial term of five years. The DoH has specified that the contracts for the new health centres should be awarded by 31 December 2008, with service commencement following as soon as possible after this date.

2. Implementation in East Sussex

2.1 The East Sussex Downs and Weald (ESDW) and the Hastings and Rother (H&R) PCTs are each in the process of procuring GP-led health centres. The location of the health centre site in Eastbourne is still to be decided but it is to be located within one of the most deprived wards in town – Devonshire. Hastings and Rother PCT is proposing to integrate the new health centre services into the new Primary Care Centre being developed as part of the Station Plaza scheme.

2.2 For both health centres, the core service will be based around a GP practice holding a list of registered patients. Each facility will offer bookable appointments for both registered and non-registered patients, and a walk-in service. These services are to be GP-led, but patients will be triaged by appropriate trained nurse practitioners who will direct patients to the most appropriate practitioner/service.

2.3 As well as basic GP services, the centres will also offer a range of enhanced services (Directed, National and Local), including childhood immunisations, minor surgery, anti-coagulation monitoring, and sexual health services. Also number of additional services (to be confirmed) will be available, and could include cervical screening, maternity medical services, contraceptive

services, vaccinations and immunisations. It should be noted, however, that there are limitations in terms of continuity of care and that not all these services can be offered to patients who have not registered with the new practice.

2.4 There will be extensive consultation with all key stakeholders, and potential tenderers will be invited to attend bidder events where the procurement process and service details will be explained in more detail. It is expected that while the contract for the new service will be let by December 2008 it is not expected that the new services will be operational until April 2009.

2.5 John Vesely, Director of Primary Care, East Sussex PCTs is attending HOSC and will give a presentation on equitable access to primary medical care. His background paper is attached as appendix 1 and his presentation slides are attached as appendix 2.

3. Areas for HOSC to explore

3.1 Following his presentation, Mr Vesely will take questions and HOSC members may wish to explore the following issues before deciding on what involvement (if any) the Committee should have in the procurement process.

- Expected health gain from the health centres
- Status of planning for the additional services and relationship of the health centres with community care
- Issues surrounding the limitations in terms of continuity of care
- Are these GP-led health centres poly clinics?
- Views of GPs and other stakeholders who have already been consulted on the plans
- Impact of the health centres on existing GP network e.g. the GP centre in Hastings has been in development for some time and HOSC understands it is to bring together existing small GP practices while Eastbourne is a new centre and will attract new GPs?
- Financial impacts
- Issues surrounding access including physical access e.g. dropped kerbs, parking, bus routes, cycle paths
- Risks to meeting the December 2008 deadline for contract awards and the April 2009 deadline for the health centres to become operational.
- Future plans for rural areas of East Sussex
- How the plans for extending opening hours of existing GP practices are progressing

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