

REPORT FROM SOUTH CENTRAL HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES MEETING, SOUTHAMPTON 16 NOVEMBER 2010

REGIONAL CONSULTATION – STORY SO FAR

In autumn 2010, six different events were held by the South Central NHS regarding 'Equity and Excellence'. One of these was held at the Madejski Stadium and attended by Cllr Norman Gould and Dave Gordon – the feedback from all six was collated and submitted as a consultation response which is included as Appendix A to this report, whilst the Berkshire meeting is summarised in Appendix B. The Strategic Health Authority has also been given clear instructions as to its priorities for the next 18 months and a transition plan is in place for the move towards the new system proposed by the coalition Government.

REGIONAL CONSULTATION – THE FUTURE

Members of the Committee are asked to note that there will be engagement events in Winchester and Slough on 10th December 2010. These will be focused on patient empowerment / choice, with the morning event at the Centre, Farnham Road, Slough SL1 4UT and the afternoon session held at the Wessex Conference Centre, Sparsholt College, Sparsholt, Winchester SO21 2NF. Should you wish to attend either of these, the registration form is attached as Appendix C. A key aim of the 'Information Revolution' drive is to ensure that all patients have a choice with regards to consultants, with the aim being that all can nominate a specific member of staff by April 2011 rather than being referred to a team. To achieve this, compiling information along the lines of the 'Dr Foster Guide' (www.drfoosterhealth.co.uk) will be a vital element. However, of course, for such an initiative to have the most positive impact, an informed choice will be required and therefore the quality of information will be pivotal.

HEALTH SCRUTINY – DEVELOPMENTS

The next few weeks should see the announcement of local authorities who have established 'Trailblazer' Health and Well Being Boards. Andrew Lansley recently stated in the Local Government Chronicle that local authorities would be encouraged to establish such bodies to encourage the spread of the new arrangements. Given the involvement of authorities in the South Central area in this matter, future meetings of the group may well have significant news to report. The Public Health White Paper is expected to be put before Parliament around Christmas 2010, which should also help clarify the exact role of local authorities and related organisations / panels in scrutinising health policy. The shadow public health arrangements should be in place for April 2011, with transitional arrangements to be ongoing until the final transformation of all aspects of the Health Service in 2013 – 14. The general culture of the NHS will also change, with a greater emphasis on transparency in light of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust report. As one example of this, Foundation Trusts will hold their meetings in public to ensure that any concerns can be addressed by all sections of the local population; as a result, the opportunities for Councillors to become involved in such activity may well grow, and Members may be well advised to ensure that they keep aware of developments.

OTHER MATTERS DISCUSSED AT MEETING

At present, a review of children's congenital cardiac services in England is being undertaken. One likely outcome of this is that there will be an alteration in the number of centres for this form of care, with an assessment being undertaken to ascertain which hospitals will become the elite centres in the new system. At present, the three nearest non-London children's heart surgery centres are Oxford, Southampton and Bristol; however, recent controversies at the Oxford Radcliffe Hospital NHS Trust may have an impact on its potential to progress. From early 2011 a formal consultation will be held with the general public, with HOSCs being encouraged to take part. A decision is scheduled to be made in July 2011, with that decision to be implemented in 2013.

On a complimentary note, the meeting did note the work being undertaken with Berkshire West PCT in terms of operating scrutiny across the region between authorities and the work of Wokingham Borough Council HOSC in involving itself in this. Congratulations.