

Herefordshire Primary Care Trust
Health Scrutiny Committee - Briefing Note

31st March 2005

Introduction

This briefing note updates the Committee on three issues:

1. Local Delivery Plan

Herefordshire Primary Care Trust has recently completed its new delivery plan which covers the period 1st April 2005 – 31st March 2008. It is expected that Plan will be approved by West Midlands Strategic Health Authority on the 23rd March 2005. The Plan sets out how the PCT will use the new NHS resources available to secure health services for local people and deliver the Government's new agenda on improving health. It also demonstrates how the PCT will meet Government targets. The PCT has a legal duty to balance its budget each year and the plan demonstrates a balanced budget for each of the next three years. The PCT will over the three years, experience year on year growth arising to an additional £56 million in 2007/2008 and onwards. For 2005/06 the PCT will have an additional £15.2 million pounds to spend. These are very significant increases in percentage terms; approximately a ten percent increase each year. The plan sets out in detail how these additional resources are to be used. The full plan is a very large document, over 500 pages. The plan has an executive summary which is designed to be a stand alone document, this summary *A Strategy for Success*, has already been published.

2. NHS Dental Services

The PCT continues to implement the agreed dental services action plan. The original plan estimated an additional 15,400 NHS dental places by the end of 2005. This estimate has recently been increased to 17,645 additional places. A key success area is the use of new Personal Dental Services contracts for NHS dentists. These new contracts secure commitment to NHS services and provide development monies to allow the dentist to take on additional NHS places. Within the next few months it is expected that nearly 50% of NHS dentists in Herefordshire will be working to this new contract. The other major area for development is the

need to improve access in the Leominster area. The PCT wishes to develop several new dental surgeries and is in discussions with Herefordshire Council about an appropriate site. The success of these negotiations is crucial to the ability of the PCT to expand NHS dental services in the Leominster area. A meeting is due to take place with the relevant Councillors on the 6th April.

Whilst the actions outlined above will not entirely resolve access to NHS dental services in Herefordshire, it is hoped that they will significantly improve access and waiting times at the dental access centres. The West Midlands Strategic Health Authority and Department of Health regard Herefordshire PCT as having made significant progress on this matter.

3. Primary Care Lead Commissioning

This is a new initiative that is designed to put practices and particularly GPs more firmly in the driving seat of the NHS commissioning process. The PCT is enthusiastic about this new initiative and believes that there will be significant patient gains from practices getting more involved in the commissioning and service redesign process. At the moment, discussions are ongoing with a number of practices regarding various different schemes. It is likely that interest in practice based commissioning will increase over the coming months as the scheme develops. Practices taking responsibility for commissioning services must do so within the context of the Local Delivery Plan and must ensure that all key targets are being met. They are obliged, through the PCT to involve the Health Scrutiny Committee in any significant proposed service changes. At this stage it is too early to confirm which practices will be taking responsibility for which services, this should be known within the next few weeks.

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