

PATIENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FORUMS

Report By: Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To note the interim report on the work of the Patient and Public Involvement Forum for the Primary Care Trust and future support for patient and public involvement in health.

Financial implications

2. None identified.

Background

Interim Report

3. The interim report on the work of the Patient and Public Involvement Forum for the Primary Care Trust was forwarded to the Chairman to provide the Committee with an insight into some of the issues being considered by the Forum and the progress made to date. A copy is attached for information.

Future Support Arrangements

4. In December 2004 the Committee was informed of changes the Government was making to the system for patient and public involvement in health. The Government had announced that there were to be changes in the system for patient and public involvement in health, including that:
 - “the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) will be abolished
 - new arrangements will be put in place to ensure continued support for PPIFs
 - NHS Appointments Commission (NHS AC) will appoint forum members in the future
 - a new centre of excellence for patient and public involvement will be set up
 - the present system of patient and public involvement will remain the same. This includes:
 - Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS)
 - Independent Complaints Advocacy Services (ICAS)
 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSCs)
 - the new arrangements will not cost more than the budget currently available for the CPPIH

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Tim Brown, Committee Manager (Scrutiny)
on 01432 260239

- PPI Forums will remain independent and responsible for their own work plans and priorities.”
5. The Committee also agreed a response to a Department of Health survey seeking comments on support arrangements for PPIFs.
 6. The Government has now responded to this consultation exercise, summarising the way forward as follows:
 - “NHS AC will be fully responsible for forum appointments from the abolition of CPPIH in August 2006
 - In the future all forums will be required to have chairs who will be appointed by the NHS AC - forum members will be involved in this process
 - The proposed ‘centre for excellence’ will become a resource centre for both forums and the NHS from December 2005
 - Staff support will be provided under a limited number of contracts, focussed on the 9 existing regions
 - Forums will be combined within PCT areas but retain a focus on every NHS trust in that PCT area
 - The number of forum members across England will remain at least at the same level
 - We will consider the development of regional and national networks for forums
 - Forums will continue to be involved in the development of the work needed to make these recommendations happen.”
 7. The response also states:

“A key theme from the consultation exercise was the need for further clarification about the respective roles of forums and Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs). Forum Support Officers in particular believed this lack of clarity and understanding had been a barrier to forums developing effective relationships. Many forum members would like greater clarity about their role and responsibilities as well as those of key partner organisations – this was particularly evident where forums had experienced difficulties forging relationships with the local NHS trust or OSC. There is agreement that greater clarity would reduce duplication and any unnecessary waste of public funds or time. Many forum members felt that it was difficult to force a trust or OSC to work with a forum if it does not want to and that clarification and guidance is the best way to iron out any current tensions and difficulties.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny will be preparing advice for forums and OSCs on this. The guidance will emphasise the importance of forums developing relationships with OSCs and establishing close and effective working arrangements.” (The timetable in the response envisages this guidance being issued by June 2005.)
 8. A copy of the Government’s response letter is enclosed separately for Members of the Committee and is available to the public on request.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Letter setting out Government response to the consultation exercise about the future support arrangements for patient and public involvement in health – 15th March 2005.