
Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
18th November 2011

Key Issues Briefing Note

1 Management Arrangements

Jeff James resigned as Chief Executive of NHS Bath & North East Somerset and NHS Wiltshire on 20 October 2011. Jeff will remain in post whilst arrangements for covering Chief Executive responsibilities are sought. Further updates will be brought to the panel as appropriate.

2 Cluster Governance

The NHS has received guidance in a letter released by Jim Easton National Director for improvement and efficiency on 29th September 2011 which requires PCT clusters to move towards more aligned governance during the transitional period up to April 2013 when PCTs will be abolished and Clinical Commissioning Groups will be fully established. The directive calls for single Boards to be created across each cluster. The timescale for making this change was set at December 1st 2011 other than in exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that this development is not a disestablishment of existing PCTs. Bath and North east Somerset PCT would continue to exist as a separate legal entity as would NHS Wiltshire but the Board for both organisations would be led by a single chairman a single set of Non Executive Directors and a single executive team. A single executive is already in place across B&NES and Wiltshire and the panel received information about the strategic director appointments at its last meeting. Since the release of the letter local discussions have been taking place concerning the benefits and risks of such an alignment and the impact of implementing it to the proposed timescale. Bath and North East Somerset Council have made representations to the Strategic Health Authority expressing concerns that the proposals may impact on local partnership arrangements and calling for a delay to the intended implementation date and additional consultation. A contributor session is now being organised to enable the panel to hear the details of the proposals and to consider the issues from the perspective of the key partners concerned. A date for the session has been set at November 29th 2011.

3 NHS Reform The Department of Health has issued further guidance for commissioners: "Developing commissioning support: towards service excellence" which sets out a framework to support the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and the NHS Commissioning Board. The Department envisages the establishment of between 25 and 35 commissioning support organisations (CSOs) across England, which will provide a range of support services to be shared by CCGs. The provision would be likely to include infrastructure services such as finance, Information management, business intelligence, pathway design, performance monitoring, communications and engagement and contract management. The NHS Commissioning Board is likely to host NHS CSOs from 2013 until no later than 2016 when CSOs will establish themselves as independent providers. It is understood that the NHS Commissioning Board itself will be represented through 4 regions in England. The

establishment of SHA clusters into 4 regions as reported to the panel at its previous meeting is expected to form the footprint of the commissioning board regions.

4 Establishment of national NHS 111 service

The Secretary of State for Health has made a national commitment for the roll-out of a single NHS telephone number – 111 – which is a free to call number, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. NHS 111 is a telephone advice line and signposting service for patients with unscheduled health problems which require assessment but which are not so serious as to require a 999 call.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs and chief Officers and Local Involvement Network leads have previously received a verbal briefing on these proposals from the Head of Engagement and Stakeholder Relations at the South West Strategic Health Authority. A paper is included as an appendix to this update which sets out information about plans to introduce NHS 111 services across the seven Primary Care Trust clusters in the South West region.