

MEETING IN PUBLIC:

Wednesday 1st February 2006 at 1400hrs

AT: ADULT LEARNING AND LEISURE CENTRE, PORTWAY AV. WELLS BA5 2QF

NOTES OF MEETING

TRIBUTE TO MIKE HANLEY

Carole Hounsell spoke in tribute to Mike Hanley, who was present at the last meeting of this forum, but who has since died after a long illness. She spoke of the affection in which Mike was held by all who knew him, and said that his death was not just a loss to the forum, but to the public. Mike was a real champion for patients. As the forum's representative on the West Mendip Hospital commissioning team he worked diligently, looking at the hospital from the patient's point of view. No detail was too small to escape his notice – he even suggested a change of door handles to make them easier for elderly fingers. His humour, willingness to take on tasks and goodness will be sadly missed

1. Welcome to those present and receiving of apologies for absence

Present: :Alan Bailey, Heather Bearman (Weston PPI Forum representative), Pauline Gillian, Carole Hounsell (Chair), Nan Stephens, Joan Woodman

Also: Rosemary Hasler (HAP)

2. Apologies for absence:

Received from: Susan Crighton, Claire Crowley, Tony Shepherd,

Also from: Stephen Harrison, Chair Mendip PCT, Sara Hincks (PPI Lead Mendip PCT)
Robin Smith, (Chief Executive Mendip PCT),

2. Members' Declarations of Interests

None

3. Public Forum

G Livings – Requested that the reconfiguration of Bristol hospitals appear as an agenda item, as he feels that this will affect Mendip residents

He also feels that there is a need for more public to attend forum meetings.

R Hudsmith

Stated that in his opinion the PCT doesn't take notice of forums. Complained that he did not get an answer at the recent PCT Board meeting in response to concerns he had previously raised about lack of a vertical notice boards identifying patient parking spaces, bus shelters and long waits for physiotherapy services.

For further information, to request papers in a different format, or notify apologies – please address all correspondence to:

The Health Advocacy Partnership, 5 Spa Road, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 7NP

Public Information Line: 0845 601 5859

Team Administrator: 01225 701 122

Fax: 01225 701 138

Email: julieowen@hapforums.co.uk

Another member of the public stated that they had waited from March to August for physiotherapy treatment. It was agreed that this was an unacceptably long wait,

Carole Hounsell stated that the forum has already addressed these issues, and will do so again.

Mrs Siddons – Said that, in relation to ‘Patient Choice’, she is worried about electronic transfer of data, as not all sectors seem to have all the necessary systems in place. She suggested that patient choice will be difficult to achieve without the IT infrastructure being in place.

Heather Bearman said that she felt that the aspect of choice of interest to most patients is in having a definite date/time for their treatment

Trust non -executive directors

One member of the public queried the process by which people become non-executive directors of the Trust. It was felt that the process was lacking in transparency.

SHA and PCT reconfigurations

(Members agreed to move this agenda item up the agenda as some members of the public expressed a particular interest in it. For an outline of the proposals being discussed, see item 6(ii) below).

-There was considerable feeling that a county wide PCT will disadvantage Mendip residents. It was thought that such a PCT will inevitably focus on bigger town such as Taunton and Yeovil, and that decision making would be remote, and lacking in understanding of our local situation.

- Graham Livings commented that changes in local government are likely to happen in the not too distant future (there is already a review in progress). He therefore queried whether, as the new PCTs are to be coterminous with local authorities, there will be yet more changes to PCTs in only a year or two's time.

There were also concerns that a county-wide PCT – might threaten existing Mendip projects. For example the urgent need to replace Frome Hospital which is over 100years old .

It was agreed that the forum should seek written guarantee from Sir Ian Carruthers (Chief Executive of Dorset and Somerset SHA) that that existing projects would continue

ACTION CH/RH

-There was also no support expressed for the one SHA option, as this was felt that a Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall SHA would contain similar populations, with similar health needs and that funding and effort would be shared equitably, rather than being diverted into problem areas such as Bristol and Bath, which it is feared would be the case with only one region-wide SHA.

R. Hudsmith expressed the view that one SHA only was part of a government move to impose regionalisation

-On the subject GP commissioning – if all the 12-14 GP practices in the Mendip area are to band together to do commissioning, will this create another version of Mendip PCT?. It was queried whether GPs should be doing commissioning instead of actually treating patients.

-R Hudsmith questioned whether Dr Sharpe, who speaks on behalf of GPs at PCT Board meetings speaks for all GPs.?

Carole Hounsell explained that as he is elected by the GPs, all of whom have a vote, it can be presumed that he has their confidence

- On the question of promoting local involvement, it was felt that non-executive board members should be elected.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

Accepted as a true record

5. Matters Arising

Changes to mental health facilities in the Mendip area

Consultation papers for closing of the Green Lane Residential Unit in Frome, and strengthening Day hospitals in the West Mendip area have been circulated.

Graham Livings (member of public) – concerned that changes initiated under temporary closure then become permanent.

Carole Hounsell – Although that is a concern, in this particular case the day hospital moves are fully supported by the carers involved.

It was concluded that although our forum has no statutory role in relation to the day hospitals, we support the proposed changes as they appear to be made to improve services to patients, and have the support of those most affected by them.

6. Matters for Information

(i) Correspondence

None other than documents relating to other items on this agenda

(ii) Brief reports from meetings attended

SHA reconfiguration meeting

Carole Hounsell and Alan Bailey had attended a meeting at the SHA headquarters in Yeovil on 6th January, to hear an explanation of the proposals. The proposals can be summarised as:

1. Ambulance Trusts – Initially there were 2 options (either 1 or 2 in the South West region), but because the merger negotiations between the Avon Gloucestershire and Wiltshire services are so far advanced it has been decided the at these should continue. As a consequence there will definitely be 2 Ambulance Trusts in the South West region, and Somerset and Dorset will merge with the Devon and Cornwall services.
2. There were similarly going to be either 1 or 2 SHAs in the South West. Although the PPI members at the meeting were overwhelmingly in favour of 2 SHAs, the impression was gained that despite the consultation exercise, the decision has already been made and that there will be only one SHA for the whole of the South West.
3. There will be only 1 PCT for the whole of Somerset. The only question to be answered for the Dorset and Somerset SHA is whether Bournemouth and Poole, (both of which are unitary authorities) will keep their PCTs, have them merged, or be part of a Dorset-wide PCT. The impression gained was that they would be merged into one PCT, with the rest of Dorset in another PCT

PCT Board

The following topics of interest to the forum were discussed

- New hospital in Frome
- Re-opening of Maternity at Shepton Mallet
- Reconfiguration of maternity services – there is to be a review with consultation.
- PCT reconfiguration is planned to take place during April-October – there will be transitional arrangements as the new structures are put in place. – Somerset has received seedcorn money to help with the changes, and has a steering group to oversee the project, which has 2 PPI representatives

Senior jobs will go. We are assured that the money saved will go into patient services.
- There was a query as to whether or not Ophthalmologists will now charge people with diabetes for eye tests.

(iii) Information from HAP

Members were reminded about the member's conference to be held on February 13th at Warminster, and asked to let the office know which workshop they would prefer to attend

7. Matters for Discussion

(i) Forums response to consultations:

(a) SHA and PCT reconfiguration

This topic was dealt with under the public forum section of the meeting (agenda item 3, see above)

(b) Healthcare Commission 'engaging with the public' consultation

Richard an ICAS caseworker, explained the link between ICAS and the Healthcare Commission (i.e. complaints against individual NHS Trusts, if they cannot be resolved locally are sent on to ICAS, and if there is still no resolution they go on to the Healthcare Commission, as he felt that this is not always clearly understood

Due to lack of time there was little discussion of the consultation document and this item was deferred.

(ii) Workplan 2006

Draft workplan was received by members.

8. Matters for Decision

Due to lack of time, there was no discussion about alterations to the workplan

9. Members Concerns/Any Other Business

- It was reported that someone had noticed members of staff at Shepton Mallet Treatment Centre going in and out without using hand-gel. In the subsequent discussion this was not thought to be a widespread problem at the Treatment Centre, but it was agreed that this matter would get particular attention on the forum's next visit.

- Alan Bailey asked whether in the light of the U-turn by the government about minor injuries, will there be a change of local policy about minor injuries?

- Someone needed small op on thumb. Not allowed to go to Shepton Mallet as other problems.

- Transport to West Mendip hospital – Although some buses do go onto the site, for other services the bus stop is 500 yards away, and there are still no bus shelters.

- Will Taunton based Trust have insight into the problems of transport problems in Mendip especially access to RUH? (this was asked by a member of the public who had arrived late at the meeting).

10. Next meeting

Will be at Frome Assembly Rooms, Christchurch Road West Frome, BA11 1EB on Wednesday 1st March 2006 at 1400hrs