HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
12 MARCH 2009

HEALTHCARE COMMISSION’S ANNUAL HEALTH CHECK 2008/09
(Head Of Overview and Scrutiny)

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Healthcare Commission’s Annual Health Check is the official process for the assessment of the quality and performance of all NHS Trusts. Overview and Scrutiny Panels are asked to contribute comments against the 24 NHS Core Standards for each of the NHS organisations that are used by the residents of their borough. These comments should be sent to the organisations concerned, which are required to include them verbatim in their annual declaration to the Healthcare Commission.

1.2 The Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel formed a Working Group, comprising Councillors Leake (Lead Member), Virgo and Mrs McCracken, to review the adherence to the 24 NHS Core Standards in 2008/09 by the four NHS organisations that are mainly used by residents of Bracknell Forest:

- Berkshire East Primary Care Trust
- Berkshire Healthcare Trust
- Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- South Central Ambulance Trust

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

2.1 That the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel agree the attached draft letters on the Annual Health Check undertaken by one of its working groups.

2.2 That the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel agree that the Joint East Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JEBH O&SC) be invited to incorporate the observations in these draft letters into any observations that Committee choose to send.

Background Papers

Healthcare Commission: The annual health check 2008/09, Assessing and rating the NHS
Healthcare Commission: Criteria for assessing core standards

Contact for further information

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March 2009

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Berkshire East Primary Care Trust
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Windsor
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Dear Dr Llewellyn,

**Healthcare Commission’s Annual Health Check 2008-2009**

**Berkshire East Primary Care Trust**

Bracknell Forest Council’s Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel have the following comments to contribute to the Berkshire East Primary Care Trust’s Annual Health Check Declaration to the Healthcare Commission for 2008/09.

Due to the wide remit of the PCT, limitations on Councillors’ time, and the number of organisations within the Committee’s purview, we have necessarily confined our enquiries to a small number of discrete issues.

**Domain 3, Governance C7:**

Bracknell Forest Council is working with the PCT to achieve full compliance with their data requirements under the Government’s new national Indicator set. Berkshire East PCT has acknowledged its statutory duty to have regard to the Local Area Agreement. The partnership has a robust system for collecting and reporting, on a quarterly basis, partners’ National Indicator monitoring data and information on progress against agreed LAA action plans. The performance information and analysis is also cascaded to various Theme Partnerships on a quarterly basis.

**Domain 5, Accessible and responsive care:**

The Panel appreciated being involved in the ‘Right care, Right Place’ consultation, also the wider engagement of the Council by PCT staff. The Panel has been pleased with the progress made on the new Bracknell Health Space to date, and we believe it is vital that this facility is completed within the specified time scale. We have concerns about the commissioning/procurement process for the Healthspace, particularly in terms of the separate handling of the services to be provided and the building, also whether there are clear enough milestones to ensure that the Healthspace is delivered on time.
Domain 7, Public Health C22:

The Panel was concerned about the long term vacancy in the Director of Public Health position in Berkshire East PCT. We note that this was addressed by the PCT, and that recruitment is nearing completion.

With kind regards,

Cllr. Ian W. Leake

Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Telephone: 01344 319693, Fax: 01344 311820

CC.
The Members of the Bracknell Forest Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview and Scrutiny – Bracknell Forest Council
Emma Silverton, Overview and Scrutiny Officer Team – Bracknell Forest Council
Dear Mr Hayton and Ms Loader,

Healthcare Commission’s Annual Health Check 2008-2009
Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Bracknell Forest Council’s Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel have the following comments to contribute to the Heatherwood & Wexham Park Hospital Trust’s Annual Health Check Declaration to the Healthcare Commission for 2008/09.

Due to the wide range of health services delivered by the Trust, limitations on Councillors’ time, and the number of organisations within the Committee’s purview, we have necessarily confined our enquiries to a small number of discrete issues.

Domain 1, Safety, C4:

a) The Panel is concerned about the Trust’s interpretation of acceptable levels of Clostridium Difficile (C. Diff). In our view, it is unacceptable to have any cases of C. Diff, and the Trust should set its targets accordingly. The Panel acknowledge that eradicating C. Diff is a major challenge for the Trust, and expect to see much more solid progress on the control of C Diff infections in 2009/10.

Domain 4, Patient Focus:

a) C13 – The Panel is concerned that facilities for visitors are not always as good as they should be. From direct experience it was noted that parents of a minor going into Heatherwood Hospital for an operation under general anaesthetic were told that there were no facilities for them to be present in the ward outside normal visiting hours.

b) C13 – The Panel is not satisfied with the accessibility of car parking at Heatherwood Hospital. The lack of car parking space and cost of parking has led to patients having to park on the road outside the hospital. Also, in one case, a Member receiving
physiotherapy had to arrive at least half an hour before each appointment began in order to wait for a car parking space to become available.

c) C15- The Panel has some concerns about the standard of food provided to patients at Heatherwood Hospital. Anecdotal personal evidence showed a low level of patient satisfaction with the meals provided and concerns were raised about the long distance from which the meals were sourced and delivered. Patients were told that meals are transported from Wales.

Domain 5, Accessible and responsive care C18:

a) The Panel are concerned about the shortage of special care baby beds at Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals. The lack of available facilities means that some premature babies are being hospitalised up to 2 hours from where they live.

Domain 6, Care environment and amenities:

a) C21 - From direct personal experience of in-patient service at Heatherwood Hospital the Health Panel are concerned that the arrangements to facilitate and encourage personal hygiene were lacking, for example a Member was asked to provide their own soap and towels and had to share one shower between a ward of 20 patients.

b) C21, The Panel is concerned about the investment of people and other resources in Heatherwood Hospital, both in absolute terms and relative to the investment at the Trust's other hospital at Wexham Park. It seems to the Panel that in all important decisions on the relative disposition of resources between the two sites, Wexham Park Hospital is favoured over Heatherwood Hospital. From direct observation this is apparent in the poorer physical condition of the buildings and facilities, the investment in staff and the standard of equipment.

The approach taken by the Trust to the Heatherwood Hospital maternity unit, whilst bolstering the Wexham Park maternity operation further demonstrates the Panel's concerns about the imbalance in investment between the two sites. Furthermore, the Panel were concerned that the conversion to a midwife-led unit at Heatherwood might mean that expectant mothers feel pressured to go to Wexham Park hospital instead.

We note that in the Heatherwood and Wexham Park hospitals 'health matters' news letter it is stated that the Trust 'believe that to build on the success we have already achieved, major investments in new buildings and refurbishments are required at both Heatherwood and Wexham Park'. Members expect to see that investments are proportionally distributed between the two sites, and that Heatherwood Hospital is properly resourced to provide the services expected of it in a sustainable way. Specifically, we would like to see clearer and more precise investment plans for Heatherwood Hospital, to demonstrate that it has an assured role in providing important health services into the future.

With kind regards,

Cllr. Ian W. Leake
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CC:
The Members of the Bracknell Forest Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview and Scrutiny – Bracknell Forest Council
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