

**SPECIAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

24 SEPTEMBER 2008

Your views - GP Led Health Centre at Ashford Hospital

The Chairman of the Performance Management and Review Committee, Councillor Philippa Broom, had invited residents to submit their views/queries on the proposed Spelthorne GP led health centre on the Ashford Hospital site and the impact residents felt this may have on our local health care.

Set out below are questions/concerns received from residents together with the answers provided by the Surrey Primary Care Trust. The names and addresses of those residents who submitted questions have been removed to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act. If you have any queries regarding your question please contact Committee Services, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines or email l.phillis@spelthorne.gov.uk or telephone 01784 446276

Question: Healthcare in Surrey is estimated at £1.4 billion this year so where will the money come from for the new GP service?

Answer - The Department of Health has allocated each PCT new funds to procure and implement a GP led health centre. In addition to this, PCT's have been encouraged to add money to the budget in order to develop extended and specialised services. As Surrey PCT's procurement involves taking over the existing walk in centre, the money currently spent on this service will be added to the budget for the GP led health centre, meaning that we can offer local people an even wider range of services.

Question: If you register with the new practice do you remain registered with your present GP as well?

Answer: In line with the current regulations for primary care registration, patients can only be registered at one GP Practice at a time. Local residents could choose to register with the new GP practice or stay with their current practice. Patients who choose not to register with the new practice will still be able to use the walk-in-centre 24 hours a day as they can now, but with a wider range of services available.

Question: Why register with the new practice if you can walk in 24 hours a day anyway?

Answer: Walk in patients (ie. those who are not registered with the new practice) will be able to access what is described as 'GP essential services' - these are the normal services that your GP can offer you, and also any additional and specialist services that are deemed to be clinically safe and appropriate to offer to unregistered patients. Additionally, walk in patients will continue to have access to the services currently provided in the walk in centre.

Patients who choose to register with the new practice will be able to access a wider range of services. As well as receiving the normal services a GP practice would offer, these patients will also benefit from an enhanced level of primary care – for example, access to maternity care, minor surgery and stop smoking support. The health centre will also be setting up specialist services to address the needs of their registered population. These are likely to include specialist clinics for hypertension, diabetes, obesity and fitness, and drug and alcohol support.

Question: Will the new service cut down waiting lists for tests and operations?

Answer: This GP led health centre is a primary care service. Patients registered with the practice in need of more specialist care or hospital treatment will be referred in the same way as they are now. Being registered at this centre will not affect hospital waiting list for tests and operations. In the future, the PCT may expand the GP led health centre contract to include a wider range of services such as a diagnostic service. If this happened we anticipate waiting times for these tests would come down.

Question: The main concern of residents is how the new setup will impinge on the services of local GP Surgeries as most residents are happy with what they have already got, particularly my ward who are looking forward to a new Spelthorne Borough Council driven medical centre scheduled to open in Spring 2009 on the existing site in Hadrian Way. It must be realised that residents, particularly the elderly require to be able to access 24 hour care to supplement the services they receive from their existing GPs and they wish to know if this is what is on offer? There is a need for a GP service at the Ashford Hospital for those who live closer to this end of Stanwell to bring GP services closer to them, is this on offer? The shortage of satisfactory GP services in this area has caused local residents to register in Ashford and Knowle Green Medical centres.

The Government has a policy 'never mind the quality look at the size' which manifests itself in more technical hospitals further away from the people, so will this facility fill all the vacuum of immediate local need care required? An example of this is the latest consultation sent to members of the Surrey and Borders Primary Health Care Foundation Trust regarding the proposed re siting of Mental Health Care Facilities. How are immediate needs going to be handled?

Finally what local facilities are going to be provided for residents of Stanwell Moor Village that at present has no doctors or Pharmacy?

Answer: The PCT currently holds a contract with Thamesdoc, an out of hour's provider, which all Surrey patients are able to access for medical advice and care outside of GP practice opening hours.

This new GP led health centre will provide care for those not registered at the practice between the hours of 8am-8pm, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. If patients prefer they can choose to seek medical advice at the health centre instead of through the Thamesdoc service.

It has been acknowledged that no one facility will be able to address all the health needs in the local area. Close integration and continued investment into services will be required in order to ensure that health inequalities are addressed and improved. This GP led health centre and the redevelopment of the St David's practice are two major investments that the PCT are funding to address health needs in Spelthorne and set up specialist services that are responsive to local needs.

All patients eligible for NHS treatment will be able to access the GP led health centre as walk in, or unregistered patients. For those wishing to register with the practice, they must live within the defined boundary. We have tried to set this boundary as wide as possible in order to ensure that as many people are able to register at the practice as possible. The new provider will be required to set the exact boundaries but the PCT has supplied the areas we would expect them to accept registered patients from – this area includes Stanwell Moor.

Particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are:

“Because of my family commitments I use three surgeries and I feel that they have all improved their services since the polyclinic was suggested. Therefore the polyclinic is now a waste of money”.

Question: I use three surgeries and know that GP services have improved since the polyclinic was first suggested; don't you think that the polyclinic is now a waste of money?

Answer: The PCT is not implementing a polyclinic – it is developing a GP led health centre which is not the same. Polyclinics offer different services and are currently being considered in London - there are no plans for any in Surrey.

More information about polyclinics can be found online at

<http://www.healthcareforlondon.nhs.uk/>

Particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital:

1. As a disabled person in Shepperton I am reliant on the NHS for my health care. I already visit a specialist at Ashford Hospital every 3 months and make separate visits there for my hearing aid battery replacements. Hence, I am familiar with the difficulties in making travel arrangements if my wife is unable to take or accompany me by car. It is time consuming and injurious to my mental state.
2. Visiting Ashford Hospital to see a GP there will be very impersonal because of the vast number of patients it will be forced to deal with in Spelthorne. Usually I never see more than two GPs at the Shepperton Health Centre and they are familiar with my conditions because of my numerous past visits over the years to see them. The importance of the familiarity and personal connection between GP and patient must not be underestimated.

Question: What are the responses to the above concerns?

Answer: We fully understand the importance of continuity of care and understand that many patients are happy with their current GP practice and don't wish to move. The PCT is not making people change their GP. We are simply offering another choice. If patients do not wish to register at the health centre, they can still benefit from the wider range of services that will be available to them as a walk-in or unregistered patient.

Question: Will my existing GP's practice in Fordbridge Road, Ashford remain open?

Answer: This project is about improving access to healthcare services, not decreasing it, we will not be closing any GP Practices as a result of this development. We understand there have been some concerns raised about the impact the health centre could have on existing practices, however we do not expect the new centre to have a substantial impact on local services.

Particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital:

My main concerns are based on the old adage that if it is not broke don't try and fix it! In Shepperton we are fortunate to have a very effective Health Centre with dedicated Dr's and nurses who know their patients and give continuity of care and with whom I can make same day appointments in most cases. I therefore see no gains in providing parallel clinics at Ashford Hospital which apart from anything else is not the easiest place to get to, particularly for anyone with mobility problems, to see a Dr with no personal knowledge of my medical history. Although this is a Government led proposal I want to see more opposition shown by the Councillors and support for the existing Health Centres within the Borough. In the particular case of Shepperton the reformed PCT promised to expedite the provision of new premises to replace the existing dilapidated buildings. That was 1 year ago and according to Dr Bellamy at Shepperton H.C., who has been the Dr pressing for the new building, he has received no further communication from them.

So, my concern is that money that was earmarked for local Health Centre improvements have, or may be, diverted to the Ashford proposed clinic. If as has been intimated the proposed clinic will be able to provide some level of immediate test/scan facilities why can the service to local existing GP's not be improved now, even if the new clinic scheme does not go ahead. I need assurance that this is not "a done deal" and that minds are open to persuasion.

Question: Where is the need for an additional clinic at Ashford and will this be financed at the expense of existing local GP's and Health Centre facility improvements?.

Answer: This development is being funded through new monies allocated by the Department of Health and the budget currently allocated to the walk in centre at Ashford Hospital.

Money used to finance the existing local GP practices is not being reallocated and used to fund the new GP led health centre.

There is a plethora of information on the specific health needs of the Spelthorne population and the results of a recent access survey found that people in the borough are not completely satisfied with the healthcare

currently provided and that they feel there is significant room for improvement. This new development will provide services to address the specific health needs of the local population. For example, the centre will offer specialist clinics for diabetes and hypertension and drug and alcohol support.

Particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital:

If this centre means that certain health problems could be dealt with under one roof, then I think it is a good idea.

In the past few months I have had appointments at Ashford Hospital, Chertsey Hospital, Staines Health Centre and Englefield Green Health Centre.

This week I have appointments at Englefield Green on 3 different days and I am told I could have to visit Englefield Green Health Centre 3 times each week for the foreseeable future.

I am fortunate to have a husband who is able to drive me about but this situation is costing us a lot of time and money which we do not have.

Just for your extra information, I am aged 77, I have Multiple Sclerosis, Osteoarthritis and lymphoedema so you will appreciate it is not easy for me to get around.

Answer: For registered patients the health centre will provide the full compliment of essential and enhanced primary medical care. Additionally, specialist services will be set up to address the specific health needs of the population. We hope that by developing this new health centre at Ashford Hospital, we are providing a convenient and easily accessible new service for the local population.

Question: If a new clinic occupies the now out patient block, will we lose the out patient clinics at Ashford?

Answer: The new GP led health centre will occupy the current walk in centre and rapid access centre on the ground floor of the hospital. The outpatient clinic will remain where it is currently situated, on the first floor of the hospital.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital is that it is an unnecessary and wasteful 'white elephant' which will destabilise the existing excellent practices that we have in the Ashford and Stanwell area.

Question: The monies should be invested in existing practices?

Answer: This money has allocated specifically for the development of a new GP led health centre and cannot be used to invest in existing practices. The aim of the development is to increase access to healthcare and invest in a wider range of services for local people.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are that the future of my GP's surgery which has served both my family and me well for many years.

Question:

1. What is the benefit in both medical and economic terms for the local community?

2. What does it mean for the future of Ashford Hospital?

Answer: There is sound evidence to suggest that increased and effective access to primary medical care services improves the health of the population. This health centre will provide specialist services aimed at improving the health of local people. The health centre will be GP led which means more services will be available. The current walk in centre will be developed in order to provide enhanced services. The health centre will be closely monitored to ensure the services are meeting the needs of local patients.

This new development has been agreed in partnership with Ashford St Peters Hospital NHS Trust. Both the Trust and the PCT view the health centre as a way of helping to further secure the future of the hospital.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are what happens to the peoples jobs already there.

Question: I currently work for ThamesDoc and am based at the walk in centre. I am concerned that I may lose my job due to the changes?

Answer: We would suggest that you contact your employer directly to address your personal HR issues.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are that we do not require a polyclinic / GP led health Centre at Ashford Hospital. The GP's and Nurses at Studholme Medical Centre provide patients suffering with illness and complex illnesses an excellent service. Patients use both GP and Nurse services and value being able to see the same family doctor for treatment. We use these services and require this current LOCAL service being provided.

Polyclinics are very expensive to develop and run. We do not require a Polyclinic / GP led Health Centre at Ashford Hospital. Please listen to Residents/Patients, we believe NHS funds would be better spent on expanding the high quality services at our own LOCAL GP SURGERY. We want the Government to: Improve services to patients by further investment in existing GP surgeries and not waste money on unwanted Polyclinics/GP led Health Centre at Ashford Hospital – Halt its plans to encourage commercial companies to run GP surgeries.

Polyclinics changing the nature of GP surgeries will: Depersonalise the healthcare – Isolate the elderly and people with complex care needs – their inaccessibility and lack of service is short sighted – patients require local EXISTING GP surgeries – How can you put a figure on compassion and human quality.

BBC News, Text Reported - Many NHS Consultants doubt the merits of a new generation of large scale polyclinics a survey suggests. BMA received 1,587 responses canvassing opinion on the proposed new super surgeries. They DISAGREED and some STRONGLY disagreed they would improve patient care and were NOT convinced they would improve access to treatment, more than 70 percent said they would destabilise hospitals and GP Practices.

Question: All members of my family and many Ashford residents are VERY worried that the new Government plans to change the way in which GP services are provided will put at RISK the comprehensive, high quality patient care that our local surgery and other surgeries provide. As a result of Polyclinic / GP led Health Centre (at Ashford Hospital) CHANGES, patients will suffer, and this will also lead to many local surgeries not SURVIVING.

Answer: The PCT is implementing a GP led health and not a polyclinic. These are two very different initiatives and it is important to understand the difference. The aim of the development is to increase access to primary medical care, not destabilise or decrease existing provision. We believe that the services that the health centre will develop and the increased access that it will provide will be very beneficial to local patients. Patients will be provided with even more choice of their primary medical care provision.

Question:

1. Both my wife, Joyce and myself will be pleased to attend. Joyce is Chair of the Spelthorne Mental Health Association. S.M.H.A. has noted the proposals with interest, and she would, pro S.M.H.A., support the proposals if they represent improved mental health services, but would oppose any deterioration.

If this aspect is not to form part of the PCT address, kindly table it as a question, 'Does the Centre improve Mental Health services'?

2. If your kind invitation to me is because I am treasurer of T.A.C.T., the Regional N.H.S. Patient Cancer User Group, may I ask, pro T.A.C.T., whether the proposals meet our requirement for T.A.C.T. support that 'the best practice shall be the normal practice'.

3. In his farewell address to Members of the Friends of Ashford Hospital, Clive Thompson was supportive, emphasising that the Health Centre was additional to local G.P. services (17-09-08).

It formed part of his contention that speaking as Chairman of Ashford and St. Peter's Hospital Trust 'the future of Ashford Hospital has never been brighter'!

4. If I am to put Spelthorne Labour Party's position, members are 'formulating a response'. We welcome perceived improved accessibility; we worry lest the close GP/Patient relationship be lost.

Answer: As part of the next stage in the process, bidders have been asked to complete the Invitation to Tender documentation which details their plans for implementation, the services they will offer, the workforce they will employ, the IT they will use and the plans they will be implementing. Two of the questions that bidders have been asked relate to the provision of mental health services, They were asked what frontline support they will provide for patients suffering from a mental health condition and for details of mental health services that they would consider setting up. Of course, an important requirement of the health centre will be that they closely integrate with existing provisions, including the services currently delivered through mental health organisations.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are we will lose a valuable local Health Centre (Knowle Green)

Question: Is my local Health Centre safe. As this is a purpose built facility within easy walking distance that I have regularly used. It has in the past provided additional services such as minor surgery and 7 day nursing cover. But these services cost money. I would be disappointed if this facility was to be downgraded or harmed in anyway. Both young and old do not want to have to travel on public transport.

Answer: This money has allocated specifically for the development of a new GP led health centre. The aim of the development is to increase access to primary medical care services and invest in new GPs running new services in the areas of most health need. Money used to finance existing local GP practices is not being reallocated and used to fund the new GP led health centre.

My particular concerns over the GP led Health Centre at Ashford Hospital is losing our local health centre at Knowle Green.

Question: Why do the Council have to take away something as important as the Local Health Centre? If you are feeling ill or have sick children are you supposed to either wait for public transport or use your car? Then where would you park. I also thought the idea was to use your car as little as possible?

Answer: This health centre will provide a new primary medical care service for the residents of Spelthorne. We are not closing down any local GP practices.

My particular concerns over the GP led Health Centre at Ashford Hospital:

“Introducing private provision of healthcare imposes conflicts between the profit motive of the operating companies and the needs of patients; increases the burden on taxpayers and encourages a two-tier health system”.

Question: How is the relationship with the individual GP going to be maintained with the Polyclinic? The distance to travel for many people will increase and it poses a threat to local surgeries how are these negative situations going to be addressed?

How many of the proposed Polyclinics will be run by private companies and what number will be American based?

When assessing the suitability of a private company what body will make the decision? If it is the PCT, an unelected body will there be transparency and what oversight will there be?

Answer: The PCT is implementing a GP led health centre and not a polyclinic. These are two very different initiatives and it is important to understand the difference.

It is also important to understand that GP practices are also independent businesses that hold contracts with the PCT and are profit making organisations.

All bidders, regardless of their legal status, will be assessed against the same criteria. The PCT, as the procuring body, will be assessing bids using a panel of experts followed by two interview panels – one made up of PCT staff and one made up of patients.

The PCT is looking to appoint a bidder who will represent value for money and who will deliver a clinically excellent service. The new provider may be an NHS body or an Independent company.

My Particular concern regarding GP Led health services at Ashford hospital are.

If the above service is anything like the walk in centre, we would have to wait hours for treatment.

Also we have been informed that the GP's would be on duty from 8am-8pm

Question: Why do we need to waste money on something that will not work? When we could do with more beds & doctors in the hospital at Ashford. I would rather have continuation with family doctor who knows my medical history?

Answer: Patients do not have to register at the GP practice; they are simply being given the opportunity should they wish to. We strongly believe that this new development will improve the health of the local population and will offer an increased and enhanced service.

Question:

- 1. What steps is the PCT taking to ensure the viability of existing GP practices (especially new Stanwell Health Centre) and existing pharmacies?**
- 2. Will the Ashford hospital walk-in centre and out of hours services continue as at present, or will there be changes - if so, what changes?**

Answer: As you may be aware the PCT released a press statement this week reaffirming our commitment to the Spelthorne Investment programme; the GP led health centre and the redevelopment of St David's Health Centre. Our Chief Executive, Chris Butler, expressed surprise at the level of confusion around these plans and the impact the new GP led health centre could have on existing services. He emphasised that by investing in local services we are showing real commitment to improving healthcare for this population.

The walk in centre will change from being provided by Ashford and St Peters Hospital NHS Trust to the newly appointed provider. As this service will now be GP led and not nurse led we anticipate a further enhancement of the services available in the walk in centre in order to provide an increased level of care to our patients.

My Particular concern regarding GP Led health services at Ashford hospital

Due to health situation prefer to see same doctors who are aware of my medical history rather than different doctors.

Answer: Patients do not have to register at this GP practice; they are simply being given the opportunity should they wish to.

My particular concern regarding the GP led health services at Ashford Hospital

Centralisation!! – What is to happen to all the other GP Surgeries/Health Centres in the area? People do not want to travel to consult with a doctor who probably is not their regular GP. For a routine consultation they just want to pop round to their 'local' surgery and see their registered doctor. If they require further investigation or treatment they can do as they do now and be referred to a proper hospital. I have reliably heard of 'Surgical Procedures' by a GP being unsuccessful and then requiring hospital intervention which itself was too late with fatal consequence.

Answer: This health centre will provide a new primary medical care service for the residents of Spelthorne. We are not closing any local GP practices.

My particular concern regarding the GP led health services at Ashford Hospital

Patient satisfaction requires both access to a GP when needed, but also continuity of care.

Question: Ashford family and Business community could potentially benefit from After-Hours GP access at the new medical Centre. Please however, what are the projected numbers for usage, as opposed to current usage of walk-in facilities. Particularly in the case of children?

Answer: There are currently 27,000 walk in attendances per annum. We would expect this to increase slightly each year due to natural growth. Additionally, with the planned further extension of services e.g. treating children and older people, we would also anticipate that there will be a further increase in the amount of people that will be accessing the walk in centre.

My particular concern regarding the GP led health services at Ashford Hospital

Loss of my excellent local GP practice whether in the short term or by long term erosion. Not being able to see my own GP who knows my medical history.

Question: Does Spelthorne have a shortage of GP's?

Answer: No area of Surrey has a shortage of GPs. When deciding where to locate the health centre we conducted a full health needs assessment of the county. It was clearly demonstrated that Spelthorne is the area with the greatest health need. The PCT felt that this health centre has the clear potential to improve the health of the community it will serve.

My particular concern regarding the GP led health services at Ashford Hospital

Would the committee agree that the main issue with regard to primary care in Spelthorne is not the provision or otherwise of Polyclinics but

the fact that some areas have a lot of doctor's surgeries and others hardly any?

Answer: The PCT is not implementing a polyclinic. It is very important to understand the distinction between this and a GP led health centre. The GP led health centre will improve access to healthcare in the area and offer local people a wider range of services.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are:

There is a history of 24/7 walk in clinics in North West Surrey causing higher attendances at A&SP A&E. Since 2004, 10-15% attendances have increased annually.

Question: Why cannot this clinic have sufficient diagnostic capability to reduce the pressure on A&SP and treat patients in the local community? The present plan is virtually no different from the existing walk in clinic.

Answer: The health centre is designed to treat primary medical care conditions, not secondary care. The diagnostic facilities and associated waiting lists in ASPH are the responsibility of the Trust to manage.

The health centre will provide an extended service than is currently provided at the WIC. Simply the provision of GPs on site from 8am-8pm, 7 days a week, 365 days a year will help to improve the services that can be provided.

Question: How can it be cost effective to run this clinic in addition to the established surgeries?

Answer: Part of the assessment of the bidder's financial models will be to ensure that we appoint an organisation who will deliver value for money; the services the community needs at a price that is within the PCT's financial envelope.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are: Will all health problems be covered?

Question: Will there be someone available at the enhanced walk in centre who can deal with emergency dental problems – at present you have to go to St. Peter's to find help at night!

Answer: The health centre will begin by providing primary medical care services. In the future it may be possible to set up a new NHS dentist in the premises. If you need some emergency dental care please contact the Emergency Dental Hotline on 0845 271 2040.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are:

If a practice loses all the acute patients who only see the doctor on occasion, they will lose a lot of their patients. This will mean that the practice will not be sustainable for the patients who want to see their own doctor for chronic illness on a regular basis.

Answer: GP Practices have a contractual responsibility to provide primary medical care services for their patients. This includes providing care

for their patients who are suffering from chronic diseases and who need regular care. It will be the patient's decision as to which practice they register with and who they feel will deliver them with the best level of care.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are: That will it be permanent, e.g. There in 2108

Question: Will we be able to see our own GP's? About the switchboard. Will we have to press 1 and so on to get through to all GP's practice?

Answer: It will be for the new provider to implement a telephone system of their choice.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are:

Will we lose our Stanwell Road GP surgery? As a family with regular, ongoing treatment we are concerned that the proposed service will be impersonal and a reduced level of medical care and personal concern will result.

Question: What will happen to the GP's who know us? How will we get repeat prescriptions? The existing GP relationship provides familiarity with our histories – how will new GP's become familiar with us and offer continuity of care? What provision for preventative medicine?

Answer: We agree that continuity of care is vital. This health centre will provide patients with greater choice for their primary medical care. If a patient does not wish to register with this new practice, they don't have to. They can remain with their existing GP.

If you register with the new practice, repeat prescriptions will be available in the same way as they are currently available.

Question: What effect will the GP led facility at Ashford Hospital have on the Staines Health Centre at Knowle Green, Staines?

Answer: We can not guarantee that there will not be an impact on local GP Practices. Patients are being given the choice of another GP practice and if they choose to register with the new practice, this will be their choice and their decision.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are:

Is the parking situation likely to improve – it's very bad at the moment when you just go for an X-Ray or Blood Test and us older people are unable to walk very far. It sounds like a quick turnover, rushed care for the sick, not a very sure care.

Question: Will we be able to see our own GP, those who we have been under for many many years and know all about us?

Will we get the same friendly care we get from our Doctor and Nurses we have known for 30 years?

How will the GP's at Ashford Hospital know all our medical history? To read mine it would take hours.

Answer: This health centre will provide patients with greater choice for their primary medical care. If a patient does not wish to register with this new practice, they don't have too. They can remain with their existing GP.

Question: Why not bring back A&E to Ashford Hospital?

Answer: This project is about improving access to primary medical care services, not acute services.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are:

Visitors to the hospital are by definition almost, inevitably elderly or partly incapacitated, and those who travel by public transport have to walk or hobble across 2 busy roads, and often in windy, rainy or icy weather – the 216 bus could easily add a few minutes on to its schedule (just as the route did in order to cover Tesco in Sunbury).

Question: Will you ensure that there will be a regular bus service to Ashford Hospital from Sunbury-on-Thames (and Ashford)? At present the 216 bus is the only one that goes near (but not to) the hospital, but it stops about ¼ mile away.

Answer: Transport is an issue for the county council so we would suggest you raise this issue with them.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are:

1st Year - 900 (estimated) patients with 1/3 of doctors working 24 hours.

2nd Year – 3,500 patients with 1 doctor working 24 hours.

Question: Seeing as this is being much as a business, is this viable, but only without people being compelled to move to the new system?

With the present state of the economy, does anybody really imagine the new money is going to be spent on the NHS?

Answer: Since this health centre will also treat the patient's currently treated in the Walk in Centre, we anticipate over 27,000 walk in patients attendances per year. This figure is due to increase by approximately 1.5% per annum. The income from these attendances will enable the health centre to be a viable business and additionally will support the development of services for registered patients.

Question: One of the primary justifications of this project was to take into account the Patient Access Survey 2006/07. In the Patient Access Survey, 3306 Spelthorne residents took part. Of these, only 50 were from the most deprived areas of Spelthorne. You then say Stanwell is one of the most deprived areas in Spelthorne and therefore needs a new GP led Health Centre. How do you know this if you haven't properly consulted those in the most deprived areas?

In the Patient Access Survey, 77% said they were satisfied with GP surgery opening hours. Only 21% said they were not happy. Where have you got the 30% figure from in the PowerPoint presentation?

Only 687 of the 3306 respondents were dissatisfied with GP surgery opening hours, and only 192 of the 687 said because their GP surgery wasn't open on Saturdays and 132 because their GP surgery wasn't open evenings. This is just 6% and 4% respectively of total respondents, how can such a small figure justify a need for a new GP led Health Centre?

Answer: The results from the recent Patient Access Surveys in 2007 and 2007/2008 are not the sole reasons for the justifications to site the health centre in Spelthorne. The results for North West Surrey, when compared to the results for the rest of Surrey, demonstrate areas for improvement and we believe that siting a centre with access from 8am-8pm, 7 days a week, 365 days a year will go some way to help with improving the levels of access. There has also been an extensive health needs assessment which has been conducted. This clearly demonstrates that Spelthorne is the area with the most significant health inequalities and it was these results that really drove the decision to site the health centre in Spelthorne.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are:

Will the existing nurse-led walk-in centre continue, separate from the facility to see a GP on a drop-in basis without being registered or will these services be combined?

Question: What will the catchment area be for the nurse-led service and for the GP service? Is the GP service in fact drop-in, or by appointment only? Is the total population of Spelthorne enough to support a new GP practice and all the existing ones?

Answer: We would like the bidders to describe to us how they would like the two facilities to work together; there could be a total integration or separation. The PCT will review the proposals submitted by bidders to ensure that either option ensures the best quality of care for patients using the health centre.

The catchment area will be for the registered population. Anybody, living anywhere in the county can access the walk in centre.

The GP service will be both walk in and by appointment.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are:

I personally don't like the idea of attending such a place and I am very concerned that it will hurt the local GPs who offer a more personal service. I do know that the practice where I am registered are very concerned that it may close them down.

Question: What are the responses to the above concerns?

Answer: We understand that you may have concerns about the affect on your GP Practice. However, this health centre will provide patients with

greater choice for their primary medical care. If a patient does not wish to register with this new practice, they don't have too. They can remain with their existing GP.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are:

That vulnerable patients will slip through the net for follow up or cross service actions as they are not seen by the same practitioners.

Existing GP's, opticians, dentists etc work closely with each other as patients go consistently to the same practitioners, this link up could be lost. Existing services will close down. Not enough parking at the proposed site. May prove difficult for some patients to get to the services.

At the moment there hasn't been that much information given to local residents about what services will take place, under what circumstances these can be accessed, and who can access them. Very difficult to make an informed decision about whether the proposal will be of benefit or a drain on Surrey PCT.

Question: Why is this proposal felt necessary when the existing services in Ashford and surrounding areas are adequate?

Answer: The health needs assessment of the area demonstrates that there are continuing health inequalities in Spelthorne. We hope that by investing further money into the area, some of these health inequalities can be reduced.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are:

That I have been with my Dr for over 30 years and he knows me, my family and my medical history. If the poly-clinic goes ahead, although the GPs may be dedicated to their profession, they may not be dedicated to the position and may use it as a stepping stone to move on elsewhere whereas my existing GP is more likely to stay and build up a relationship and knowledge of my family. I fear that at the polyclinic, I may have to see a different Dr every time. I am also concerned that the GP surgeries we have now will gradually decline due to patients leaving to use the poly-clinic and therefore they will be forced to close."

Answer: We understand that you may have concerns about the affect on your GP Practice. However, this health centre will provide patients with greater choice for their primary medical care. If a patient does not wish to register with this new practice, they don't have too. They can remain with their existing GP.

My particular concerns over the GP led health centre at Ashford Hospital are:

We are totally against Polyclinics and are very happy with our GP's, why try to fix something that isn't broken? How can you have any faith in a doctor at the Polyclinic when you are seeing a different one every time? You need to build up faith and trust in a doctor, which you have at

present, there is no continuity at the Polyclinic. Our current doctors have everyone's personal records and knows our family history, why change this? There is no need for a Polyclinic, let us be, the doctors don't want a Polyclinic. Is the Polyclinic just to save money? Whenever you change things, it is not always for the good of the patient, such as the joining of Ashford and St. Peter's hospitals and mixed wards.

Answer: We understand that you may have concerns about the affect on your GP Practice. However, this health centre will provide patients with greater choice for their primary medical care. If a patient does not wish to register with this new practice, they don't have too. They can remain with their existing GP.

Question: In the service specification "Equitable Access to Primary Medical Services, 14th May 2008" the PCT said that the proposed new service would offer 'a vastly improved range of services' (Summary page1 paragraph 3).

What services has Spelthorne been missing to date and how far behind the rest of Surrey and neighbouring health authorities are we with regard to these services?

Answer: The service specification spoke of commissioning an integrated service with the existing walk in centre which would enhance the services available to patients, offering them access to an increased range of professionals and a vastly improved range of services. By providing medical leadership through GPs unregistered (walk in) patients will be able to access a wider range of services that currently a nurse led service is unable to offer e.g. children and the over 55's.

Question: The most common complaints regarding access to GP services are the inability to book an appointment in advance, the lack of a Saturday service and the inability to get home visits. How will this GP health centre improve access, particularly for those parts of the Borough furthest away from Ashford hospital?

Answer: The health centre will be open from 8am-8pm, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The new provider will be expected to implement an appointment's system that is convenient and easily accessible for their patients. The ability to book an appointment in advance will be one of the indicators that the health centre is regularly measured on. As with all GP practices, only registered patients will be eligible for home visits and it will be up to the provider to set in place the arrangements to cater for this.

Question: The specification includes obstetric, maternity and paediatric services, the justification being that Spelthorne has the lowest birth weight babies in Surrey. ASP trust already has maternity services targeted at teenage mothers in Stanwell. What services are expected to be provided by this GP service? Does this represent extra funding for maternity or will funding be transferred from the St Peter's unit?

Answer: Extra money is not being specifically allocated to maternity services nor is funding being transferred away from ASPH. Instead, what this health centre is required to do is address the health needs of their population, one of which is the low birth weights. How the new provider wishes to do this will be one of the questions they will be evaluated against in the next stage of the process.

Question: The specification seeks education about obesity (which is a worthy objective). Will the service offer free or subsidised weight reduction classes for all who need them?

Answer: How the provider wishes to provide increased education about obesity awareness and management will be for them to decide. The PCT is not prescribing *how* services are to be delivered; we are encouraging providers to be innovative and imaginative in their service proposals.

Question: Services which are undersupplied include free/subsidised chiropody, and back pain clinics. A self referral service for both of these would in my view represent a better use of funds than more funds into a standard GP service. In respect of back pain the service might include diagnostics, physiotherapy and free or subsidised classes (e.g. in Alexander technique which has been shown to help in a third or more of sufferers). Could the specification be modified to include these services?

Answer: The provider will have the responsibility to deliver the standard 'essential' GP services, additional services and the specialist services that have been specified to them. They also have the opportunity, through practice based commissioning, to develop service specifications and contract for new services to be delivered; services to meet the needs of their population. The PCT will expect the new provider to become actively engaged in this opportunity and look to pro-actively improve the health of their population.