

Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No.05/12

Date: 12 November 2012

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: To update Members on Progress with the relocation of the DMC GP practice and walk in centre from Canterbury Street to Balmoral Gardens Healthy Living Centre



Kent and Medway

Progress report - DMC GP and Walk-in centre relocation

In October 2012, NHS Kent and Medway presented a paper to HASC (attached to this briefing note) regarding the relocation of the DMC GP practice and walk-in centre from Canterbury Street to Balmoral Gardens Healthy Living Centre.

The committee deemed the proposal substantial and in need of three months formal consultation. NHS Kent and Medway have made arrangements to undertake this work in order to seek patient, carer and stakeholder feedback on the proposal to enable us to make an informed decision.

Role of the Walk-in centre

The Walk-in Centre can provide treatment for minor injuries or illnesses such as cuts, bruises and rashes. It is intended as a complementary service to regular GP and A&E services but is not designed for treating long-term conditions or immediately life-threatening problems. A Walk-in Centre is not a replacement for A&E, but may assist by ensuring that some patients do not unnecessarily try to access A&E.

You do not need to be registered and you do not need an appointment to use the Walk-in Centre. Any member of the public can simply walk in to be seen regardless of where they are registered.

Estates background

The practice is currently housed in a temporary facility, which is not suitable for long term health care and has proved problematic during cold months. DMC staff members are supportive of the proposal to move to a permanent facility, as at Canterbury Street this is no longer possible. It is important to relocate the practice into high quality permanent accommodation at the earliest opportunity.



The site at Canterbury Street has planning approval until October 2013 and the temporary facility must be removed by that time. There will be a 6 month build and commissioning period required to make Balmoral suitable and we would be keen to involve patient representatives in making sure the environment is patient friendly.

Due to governmental changes to the NHS, from 1 April 2013 estate and estate services will transfer into NHS Property Services Limited. In order to ensure effective handover, it is necessary to ensure that new contracts are in place and estates projects have been started before that date.

The estates options explored initially were existing NHS Kent and Medway sites within a close radius to ensure that the practice population could still easily access this service. From a sustainability and delivery perspective it was not deemed viable to start looking for alternative facilities.

The facilities owned / controlled by NHS Medway within a mile radius were:

- 105 Nelson Road, Gillingham – a small facility occupied by a local practice with no spare capacity and little parking
- Balmoral Gardens CHLC with the ability to utilise staff office accommodation

Widening out the search other NHS Medway facilities within the Rainham and Gillingham locality were explored:

- Twydall green clinic – no additional capacity and limited parking
- Parkwood Health Centre – no additional capacity but good parking
- Rainham Community Healthy Living Centre – no additional capacity

All of these sites, except Balmoral Gardens were deemed too far from a patient access perspective.

Concerns raised by HASC

One of HASC's main concerns about the proposal to relocate was parking for patients and staff. As part of the consultation process, we will be looking into car parking facilities within the local area and plan to undertake a car parking audit. Members were also concerned about the distance from Balmoral Gardens to Medway Hospitals Accident and Emergency department. Some patients, having been seen at the walk-in centre, are then referred to A&E.

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Currently the walk-in centre is located 0.8 miles from the Accident and Emergency department. If the centre moved into Balmoral Gardens it would be 0.9miles from the Accident and Emergency department.

Consultation

It is important we enable a robust two-way dialogue between staff, patients, GPs, stakeholders and the local population, ensuring a transparent and well informed debate about the issues faced. It is important that any decisions taken are informed by both local opinion and clinical evidence that meets the requirements of sections 242 and 244 of the Health Act.

It is planned that the consultation will launch on 30 November 2012 and run until 28 February 2013.

During the consultation we will be speaking to a wide range of patients and stakeholders:

Target audience

- § General public
- § DMC GP patients
- § DMC GP Patient Participation Group
- § DMC walk-in patients who use the service during the consultation period
- § Community and voluntary support groups
- § Staff at DMC and Balmoral Gardens
- § GPs
- § Pharmacies
- § MPs, HASC, Medway Council
- § Media
- § Medway Commissioning Group Patient Council
- § Medway Commissioning Group Health Network
- § Medway LINK
- § FT Governors, members and staff
- § MCH and KMPT local patient engagement forums
- § Local Medical Committee

Methods

- o Online survey
- o Distribution of consultation document across Medway
- o Media through press releases, letters to editor
- o Contact with DMC GP patients
- o Public event
- o Attending meetings with voluntary and community groups to brief as invited
- o "Talking wall" at both Balmoral Gardens and Canterbury Street
- o Websites – PCT and DMC
- o Visit to both sites for Councillors
- o Social media – Facebook and Twitter



- o Information in GP surgeries, children's centres, contact points
- o Email, postal and telephone point of contact for people to make their comments known

Next steps

During the consultation period we will update councillors on feedback to date at the next HOSC meeting. Following the close of the consultation, we will inform HASC of the decision taken and of the entire feedback from the consultation via a briefing note to enable works to begin in a timely fashion to make Balmoral ready. There are tight time constraints on the planning and therefore we will need to work smartly to ensure the minimum of disruption to patients and staff and smooth running of services.

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