

Chorleywood & District Residents Association

Health Sub-Committee

Report to the Executive Committee – 14 April 2010

NHS Hertfordshire

The West and East & North Hertfordshire PCTs merged on 1 April to form Hertfordshire PCT. The new PCT is called NHS Hertfordshire.

Hemel Birthing Unit

Following a public consultation, the Herts PCTs decided not to re-open the Hemel Birthing Unit. Midwife led and full maternity services are provided for West Herts at Watford Hospital. Arising from the consultation, however, are recommendations for developing the ante and post-natal services in West Herts Hospitals.

Hertfordshire LINK

The second AGM of Hertfordshire LINK will be held at 7pm on Tuesday, 25 May at the Fielder Centre, Hatfield. There will be a buffet from 6pm. The guest speaker will be Anne Walker, CEO NHS Hertfordshire.

Below are extracts from the latest e-bulletin from Hertfordshire LINK.

Foot Care in Hertfordshire

Jacky Khara, researched the foot care services for the older peoples theme group of Hertfordshire LINK. Here is her report.

“NHS podiatry services have re-prioritised the care that they give, concentrating on patients with ‘higher-risk’ foot health problems. Although there has been an increase in the number of podiatrists there are still not enough to meet the need. People who are at ‘low-risk’ must either pay for private care or use the voluntary sector (where available). Evidence suggests that in the long term, untreated ‘low-risk’ patients may return to the NHS as ‘high-risk’ patients, which is not beneficial for the patient, and more costly for the NHS in the long term.”

The outcomes of the enquiry are negative in respect of toenail care for frail elderly people in Hertfordshire.

□

West and East & North Herts podiatry services work to strict criteria.

□ The majority of elderly frail people sit within the ‘low-risk’ category.

□ Podiatry services no longer treat ‘high-risk’ patients in their home, they must find transport to the clinics.

□ People can refer themselves by requesting a form from the appropriate foot health service or be referred by any health care professional.

Chorleywood & District Residents Association

- East & North Herts foot health service provides sessions on 'How to manage your toenails—particularly if you find them hard to reach.'
- West Hertfordshire's foot service does not hold any sessions at present.

Adult Care Services (ACS) state that cutting of toenails does not come within their remit. The response from six Home Care agencies across Hertfordshire agree with ACS that home carers are not permitted to cut toenails.

"If Carers observe a problem with the toenails of a client who is unable to attend to their own feet they should advise the client to contact a private chiropodist or inform the family."

In Conclusion we see that Age Concern does provide a voluntary nail cutting service in other parts of the country, but not at present in Hertfordshire. Which means there is a gap in service for elderly frail people who are house-bound and bed-bound. If there are no family members nearby and the person is dependant on carers then the problem is compounded

Report on the Hertfordshire LINK public meeting on "Care of the vulnerable in hospital"

The driving force for this event came from members of the public indicating to us that the care of the very vulnerable in hospital was an issue of great concern. Minority groups highlighted for being at risk on entering in hospital include;-

- Older people with dementia
- People with learning disabilities
- Autism
- Severe physical and sensory disabilities
- Mental health issues

The objectives of the event were;-

1. Learn how the care of the very vulnerable is being addressed by the two Hertfordshire Hospital Trusts.
2. Input into the hospitals the issues and concerns relating to the needs of the very vulnerable.

People attending the event were asked to complete a feedback sheet to help Hertfordshire LINK develop future work in this area. Responses to the questions were numerous and wide-ranging and included the following recommendations;-

- Discharge planning for vulnerable patients to be considered separately from general discharge planning.
- Dedicated funding for facilitation nurses which should be 'ring-fenced'.
- Clear procedures to enable staff to identify vulnerable patients at an early stage and provide appropriate levels of support throughout their stay in hospital.
- Vulnerable people to be assigned a named nurse who is able to respond to individual needs.
- Greater emphasis to be placed on identifying vulnerable people in the community.

Chorleywood & District Residents Association

- Additional resources to be made available to enable existing work with people with learning disabilities to be extended to include other vulnerable groups.
- Provision of independent advocates for vulnerable patients.
- Better communication between health services, adult care services and hospital trusts.
- Work within hospital trusts to be extended to include GP's and Health Centres.

The conclusion drawn from this event is that concern exists with regard to care of vulnerable people living in residential homes and that Hertfordshire LINK should include this in a future project.

Quality Accounts

All providers who provide NHS acute, mental health and learning disability services are required to prepare a Quality Account in respect of the financial year 2010/11. The deadline for submission of this Quality Account is 30th June 2010.

Quality Accounts aim is to enhance accountability to the public and ensure leaders of an organisation are engaged in the quality improvement agenda.

Quality Accounts should contain information which is relevant to both national and local priorities, but with an emphasis in local content. It is expected that the Quality Account is constantly reviewed, built upon and improved by patients and the public in the content. LINK along with the Primary Care

Trust (PCT) and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee must be offered the opportunity to comment on the report ahead of publication.

Hertfordshire LINK will be commenting on reports from;-

- East & North Herts NHS Trust
- Hertfordshire Community Health Services
- Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust
- West Hertfordshire Hospitals Trust

The deadline for Hertfordshire's response is the end of May 2010