

PBC NEWSLETTER

What is PBC and How Long Has It Been in Existence?

'PBC' stands for Practice Based Commissioning. PBC has been in planning stages for three years and is now being developed to deliver results.

What does PBC involve?

Practice Based Commissioning empowers your local GP Surgery to identify services that you currently receive at the big acute hospitals such as Southampton General Hospital and the Royal Hants County Hospital with a view to commissioning the same quality service in your local area. This means that, if appropriate, you will not have to travel to these big hospitals for your treatment or consultation.

Please bear in mind that not all services may be delivered locally and that some conditions are more serious and need to be delivered at the acute level.

What Is the Point of Doing This?

It is in the best interests of each patient if their consultation or treatment can be provided much closer to home and thereby extremely valuable time and healthcare funding can be saved.

The purpose in developing Practice Based Commissioning is to:

- Improve the patient experience
- Improve patient's quality of life
- Provide locally based services
- Reduce attendances at acute hospitals
- Reduce healthcare costs

Does this mean the closure of my GP surgery?

NO! You may have seen media coverage of PBC that claims that hundreds of surgeries will be forced to close to form 'polyclinics' or 'superclinics'. That may be the case in large conurbations such as London, Manchester and Liverpool but that is not the intention for Hampshire.

The whole focus for PBC in Hampshire is to bring services closer to patient's homes, where possible using existing GP Practices.

'So This Is Just A Cost Cutting Exercise?'

The Department of Health has stated that financial resources that are freed up by providing local services must be reinvested in further development of localised services. So, where savings are made they will be ploughed back into developing yet more local healthcare services. Patients will benefit.

'How Do You Decide Which Services to Provide Locally?'

By looking at the health and social care needs of the local population.

'What Is the Public Involvement in Developing Local Services?'

It is vital that the local community is consulted before any firm proposal is submitted to develop local services. There are a number of ways to achieve this:

- Consulting with patients by means of Surgery posters and leaflets
- By features in local and free newspapers
- By direct patient contact
- By inviting patients to join "Hampshire LINK"
- Consulting with the Local Authority through Borough Councillors

'What PBC Work Has Been Undertaken Locally So Far?'

Elderly Assessment Units (EAUs)

Elderly patients with either long term or multiple conditions are frequently admitted because of perceived emergencies. The reality is that nearly 1/3rd of these admissions are unnecessary, and lead to considerable stress for the patient and considerable strain on the hospital, and ambulance resources. EAUs offer an alternative to admission by bring hospital doctors into the community setting who can then assess a patient's condition and ensure that appropriate treatments and monitoring are carried out locally.

Ophthalmology

Many patients who have glaucoma identified by their Optician during their sight test will be advised to see their Doctor. GPs will typically refer all such cases to hospital consultants, creating real pressure on waiting times for patients, many of whom will not require surgery for several years. Once a clinically robust 'pathway' is established, many patients can be seen by appropriately qualified optometrist, who will manage the patient's sight concerns, only involving the hospital teams when surgery becomes necessary.

'How Will Practice Based Commissioning Develop in the Future?'

The conditions identified in the paragraph above are just the start in developing local services. If you or someone in your family group receives treatment at an acute hospital that you believe may be suitable to be delivered locally then let your GP

know. From your comments GPs will be able to consider what future services may be provided locally and can research the feasibility of delivering those services.

'GET INVOLVED'

All of the above services are in the planning stages and comments from the local community are welcomed. You can pass your comments to your GP surgery about what services you think may be delivered locally.