

Bungay Patient Participation Group – 9th March 2017

The future of primary Care – nationally and locally. Summary

General practice in Great Yarmouth & Waveney has traditionally been strong. All of the practices are rated *Good* or *Outstanding* by the CQC and the very recent national patient satisfaction study has shown Gt Yarmouth & Waveney's results to be the most positive set in Norfolk and Suffolk. But it is getting harder and harder and GPs and their staff are now working exceptionally hard and for very long hours to maintain that position.

Primary care/general practice is facing enormous challenges both nationally and locally. Demand is going up steeply because of changes in - demography (people are living longer but with long term conditions), patient expectations (people's views of what they can expect are rising because of political promises and the increased use of the internet), more care is possible in the community and is moving to it from hospitals, there are huge shortages in workforce (particularly in GPs and there is no real likelihood of many more becoming available), many GPs are now in their 50s and there is a potential for many to retire soon, funding of general practice has been under pressure for many years and is now a smaller proportion of the total NHS spend than it has been for a long time, costs are rising and the overall difficult financial position of the NHS means there isn't more funding to pump in.

As a result, general practice cannot continue to operate as it has traditionally – it must adapt to take account of the new circumstances. Great Yarmouth & Waveney CCG have made it one of their top 3 priorities because general practice is the foundation of the local NHS and more than 90% of all care takes place there.

The CCG have a new general practice strategy and plan and the practices (there are 18 different providers of general practice services in GYW) are working together to maximise the impact of their total resources, to continue to perform well and to evolve.

Whilst the most obvious ways to address the challenges are now universally accepted, those changes are significant and both general practice staff and the public will find them quite a change. But the changes are both necessary and can lead to better services and outcomes for patients.

The major parts of the strategy are as follows –

Localities – there are 4 natural localities in Gt Yarmouth & Waveney – Great Yarmouth, Gorleston, Lowestoft and Sth Waveney. These localities share many services, are used to working together and together they are each of a size where resource use can be maximised. Service planning and developments will increasingly be on a locality basis.

Working at scale – Practices working together in a locality can achieve more than they can individually. This approach is nationally accepted and by sharing and coordinating resources with other community based services economies of scale and the benefits of greater use of scarce resources and expertise within the group can be achieved. The 4 localities are the natural basis for such collaboration.

New models of care. – Operating in the same way as previously when the circumstances have and are changing makes no sense. By operating in a collaborative way and introducing new ways to address the problems of workforce shortages and the specific needs of increased demand and health inequalities, practices will be better able to develop services, manage their workload and offer a stimulating and fulfilling work life for staff.

- Moving from a strictly medical model. With the national shortage of GPs and the opportunities available from using the specialist skills of different health professionals there is a need to move to a different model of care which optimises the use of scarce GP time but also recognises the changing world and uses appropriate staff to deal with specific problems. Sometimes this will be using local government or voluntary sector experts in close conjunction with general practice.

- Access to health advice and care. Whilst general practice locally will comply with the new national 7 day requirements for general practice access due in 2018/19, access to improved advice and care for patients is being considered more widely locally. Modern society accesses information in a different way to previously and there must be development and roll out of a range of different ways of doing this eg. supporting self help via different professionals such as community pharmacists, via the internet, via digital and phone consultations. The CCG will support the development of a range of these common to all practices across the CCG.

- Increasing efficiency. All organisations can improve their efficiency and the implementation of the *10 High impact actions to release capacity* will be encouraged and supported in practices and localities. These guidelines have a range of ideas and methods to release more clinical time for seeing and treating patients.

- Increasing integration. Increased collaboration extends to working more closely with partner organisations in the health system and local government. The benefits of integration in planning and service delivery can be significant. Local government services can have an enormous impact on the wider determinants of health and unified operational management of all of the health professionals in an area around practice populations can provide better care more efficiently.

- Leadership and organisation. Successful change needs strong leaders and the CCG is making funding available over each of the next two years to support the creation of more capacity and capability to manage change, in general practice itself. The practices have already started to form new collaborative teams and are working hard to find better ways of caring for patients.

- Infrastructure. The estate and IT which general practice uses is of enormous importance to the effectiveness of services delivered. The CCG has a well developed estate plan to create locality hubs housing integrated and multi-disciplinary teams in modern practice premises and a comprehensive IT plan is under construction. There has been significant investment in health service premises over recent years and a number of new centres have already been opened. Greater practice collaboration will benefit from better data transfer and full use of the opportunities of digital communication.

The CCG will provide leadership and support, in the widest sense, to implement what it believes to be a clear and beneficial set of changes – for patients and general practice. Practices working together more collaboratively with other local organisations, in natural localities, using new ways of working to maximise technical opportunities and the excellent local workforce will provide better care and a more resilient and successful group of practices.

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