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Chair
Health Communities Select Committee
London Borough of Lewisham

18/11/2016

RE -Merger of Partnerships- Hillyfields/Brockley Road, Honor Oak, Morden Hill and St Johns Medical Centre General Practices. To be known as the Central Lewisham Care Partnership

I have been advised by NHS England (NHS E) and Lewisham CCG (CCG) to inform you of the above proposal which we hope will be affective from the 1st April 2017

I am the Management Partner at St Johns Medical Centre and lead the team of mandated representative partners ,one each from the 4 partnerships involved.

The GP sites at Hillyfields and Brockley Road are run by the same group of partners and as such there are 5 sites and 4 partnerships involved in this development.

We have been discussing the opportunity to work at scale for nearly 2 years. All the signals coming from Simon Stevens CEO NHS E say we should be working at a scale of over 30,000 patients to deliver good quality care in the community and with the DoH pushing for integration with Social Services the partners of the above practices saw the opportunity to lead the working at scale in General Practice in Lewisham.

Our proposal is to merge the 4 partnerships into one partnership covering all the sites.

The model is taken from the Birmingham area where practices merge the legal entity (the partnership) but retain the individual contracts with NHS E/CCG unlike the Southwark merger in August where the contracts were handed back and a new overarching one issued by NHS E

The main aim of our model is to simplify the merger but also retain the individual style that each practice offers its patients

Patients will see very little change to the care they receive at their chosen practice indeed our aim is for continuity of care whilst streamlining the back office function in order to put more resources into out front line..

This proposal fits with the Lewisham Health Care Partners (LHCP) vision and in fact I represent Lewisham General Practices on the Board of that partnership.

This is not a change in the delivery of services to residents but is an attempt to make general practice in Lewisham more sustainable and controlled by the partners that choose to come at work in central Lewisham rather than multi nationals such as Virgin Medical and others.

We will, in time, be expanding service across the sites to deliver quality care closer to home for all our patients

Our time line for approval by NHS E and CCG is tight as the joint committee sits on the 15th December but it is important to stress that residents will see no change in the place or from the people they see now. We are having an engagement event early December (before the joint committee) with key people from each of the practices current patient groups to explain the plan. We envisage keeping the individual patient groups at each delivery site (current practice) and having a partnership

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level group they can feed their ideas into.

In context all the proposed sites are situated in central Lewisham and form 45% of Neighbourhood 2 within the CCG and will serve approximately 50,000 patients from its 5 sites. This proposal will certainly enable us to work more closely with our social services and community colleagues.

Whilst this model is not new we are the first to propose at this scale in Lewisham, although there was a merger of 4 practices in the south of the borough a few years ago that was not called into OSC. Our plan has 100% backing from the CCG indeed we are being used as the pilot template should other practices consider working at scale.

We are asking that this is not called in formally by OSC as this would mean our time line was unachievable but we are happy to discuss either with you or committee what benefits accrue to your residents from such a development.

In closing I would add as an elected councillor myself in London Borough of Sutton and holding the position of Chair of Adult Social Service and Health Committee (equivalent to your cabinet post) and lead Cllr for Public Health and Vice Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board I understand only too well concerns that members might have hence our offer for a wider dialogue should you so wish with a request for you to consider if a formal call in is really necessary.

Yours sincerely



Colin Stears
Management Partner St Johns Medical Centre
Lead Proposed Merger Development Group