

Improving access to local medical services – background briefing notes

The NHS “Next Stage Review” Interim Report (October 2007) carried out by Lord Darzi (the Report), reported that, despite sustained investment and improvement in the NHS over the past ten years, access to primary medical care services - that is those health services which are local to where people live, and the quality of those services, continues to vary significantly in different localities across the country including some areas of Eastern and Coastal Kent.

Recent research shows that the gap in life expectancy has widened between different areas despite service improvements right across Eastern and Coastal Kent. Specifically, disadvantage (which encompasses financial circumstances and social class, lifestyle, levels of illness and death rates) is considered one of the more important indicators of poor health.

Lord Darzi pledged to provide more local services reflecting local needs and with easy access for everyone. This “Equitable Access in Primary Medical Care Programme” will play a significant role in achieving this vision.

Ministers have announced that PCTs will establish new local health services reflecting local need.

Eastern and Coastal Kent PCT Board has agreed not one but two new developments, one in Swale and one in Thanet.

The decision to locate new local health services in these areas has been calculated using various indicators and evidence. This has been agreed by all the relevant stakeholders including the Local Medical Committee and the public health teams. An assessment of local health needs influenced the decision as well as levels of disadvantage, life style, life expectancy and quality of life. Local GP activity was also taken into account when making final decisions.

In line with Department of Health requirements the PCT will be delivering a service which will be:

- Open 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week
- GP led
- For registered and non registered patients
- For booked appointments and a walk in service
- Up and running by April 09

The time scales for planning and delivery are very tight. (see summary document)

We are engaging with local people to ascertain what the local population is looking for from the new service in relation to:

- the range of services to be provided
- location of the service

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Distribution list

PCT Practice Based Commissioning leads and General Practitioners in Thanet and Swale

Parish councilors for Thanet and Swale

Local Authority Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees

PCT Health and Wellbeing sub groups for Thanet and Swale

PCT Non – executive directors for Thanet and Swale

PCT Patient and Public Reference Group

Local Medical Committee

Local Dental Committee

Local Pharmacy Committee

Local Optician Committee

Eastern and Coastal Kent Public Health Directorate

Local Authority regeneration leads

Children's Trusts

Head of Community Hospitals

Social services district managers

Local voluntary groups

General public via local press

Representation from seldom heard groups

Eastern and Coastal Kent NHS community services

Eastern and Coastal Kent Virtual panel