

Item 8: GP recruitment attraction package for Medway, Swale and Thanet (pilot)

By: Kay Goldsmith, Scrutiny Research Officer

To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 11 May 2022

Subject: GP recruitment attraction package for Medway, Swale and Thanet (pilot)

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Summary: This report invites the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the information provided by the Kent and Medway CCG.

It is a written briefing only and no guests will be present to speak on this item.

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## 1) Introduction

- a) In early March, the Chair of HOSC met representatives from the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group Workforce team (“the CCG”), Medway Council and the Local Medical Committee (LMC) to discuss a pilot project being developed to improve GP recruitment in three local areas (Medway, Swale and Thanet). These areas have a low GP: patient ratio and the pilot aims to improve this and relieve pressures on the local health system. If it is successful, the intention is to roll it out across other areas in Kent.
- b) The Chair has asked that details of this pilot be shared with HOSC, to seek their support of the scheme.

## 2) The pilot

- a) The CCG is proposing an “attraction package” pilot that focuses on recruiting GPs in Medway, Swale and Thanet, and if successful the intention is to roll it out across other areas of Kent. The package is to include:
  - Financial support for the GP and practice funded by the CCG
  - Support from local councils with issues such as school places, childcare, housing and similar
  - An educational package from the Kent and Medway Primary Care Training Hub
  - Flexible and supportive job plans with mentoring from the practices/Primary Care Network
- b) On 17 March 2022, the Primary Care Commissioning Committee agreed a £500k package over a two-year period that allows 20 x £25k packages to be distributed as follows:
  - 5 Coastal Fellowships - linked to Kent & Medway Medical School; likely 3 in Swale and 2 in Thanet
  - 5 GPs in each of Swale, Medway & Thanet

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### 3) Barriers and challenges to GP recruitment

a) The Workforce team described several barriers and challenges to recruiting and retaining GPs. These include:

- Limited resource: a general shortage of trained GPs, with it taking many years to produce qualified individuals.
- Locally trained GPs tend to leave for London or work abroad.
- Overseas trainees – there can be a lack of support in place and limited knowledge about the visa process. Individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds want assurance that they will be welcomed.
- Myths and perceptions about living in a so-called deprived place.

b) As well as liaising with local stakeholders, the CCG have contacted Hope Citadel, a primary care organisation in Oldham, Manchester which has addressed similar challenges. Recommendations included:

- A focus on deprivation medicine from the outset.
- Setting out what the local community had to offer and what it would be like to live and work there.
- Building relationships with prospective recruits, getting to know them and showing them round the local area. Once employed, making the GP feel welcome by attending monthly support groups and joining a What's App group with others new to the area. A real effort is made to support their transition.

### 4) What can local councils do?

a) The CCG have asked the local authority and district councils can support they can provide the project. Requests have included:

- Provide a point of contact for new GPs that offers advice and guidance in areas such as education, childcare and housing.
- Provide assistance to the CCG in producing a recruitment brochure, setting out details about the local area and what it has to offer.
- Dispel myths about how welcoming Kent & Medway is for new arrivals.

### 5) Next Steps

a) The intention is to advertise the positions in June 2022. The package will be advertised by a national campaign run by the NHS Communications team.

b) The Chair of HOSC is following up with KCC and district colleagues to see what support can be offered to the scheme.

c) HOSC are requested to provide their support for the scheme. The following documents are appended to this covering note:

- The proposal paper that was sent to the PCCC on 17 March 2022.
- The criteria for the non-Fellowship positions.

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**5. Recommendation**

RECOMMENDED that the Committee consider and support the scheme to recruit GPs in Medway, Swale and Thanet.

**Background Documents**

None

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