

EXTRACT OF THE MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2016

PRIMARY CARE WORKFORCE PLANNING

The Chair requested an update following the concerns that had been expressed around the two recent closures of GP practices at Marples Surgery and Queens Road Surgery.

Professor Farooqi commented that both practices had been single GP practices and both GPs had submitted their notices to resign from their contracts. Once it became clear to the CCG that the Marples Surgery premises would not be available for future use as a surgery; the only option available was to disperse patients to other GP practices in the area. The decision of the GP to resign from his contract at the Queens Road Surgery was unexpected and the patients registered at that practice came from all parts of the City and the county. There were approximately 2,000 patients involved and these were being dispersed amongst other GP practices within the City.

It was generally acknowledged that there were significant pressures on GP practices particularly as recent changes in the national funding formula had resulted in practices in the City receiving less funding. The CCG were working collaboratively with practices in the City to promote forming federations and offering 'golden hello schemes' in an attempt to address issues of recruitment and retention.

It was suggested that a 6 month period of notice would be useful to allow more time to make alternative arrangements for patients affected by the closure of a practice. In response, Professor Farooqi stated that the CCG contract with GPs had a 6 month period of notice. However, GPs general contracts were negotiated nationally and were subject to a 3 month notice period and could not be changed without further national negotiation and agreement. However, the CCG would be prepared to explore whether a voluntary agreement could be negotiated locally with single handed GP practices in order to help future planning of services to patients. This would enable more time to consider alternative options for the continued care of patients, especially in instances where there was a cumulative effect arising from more than one practice closing in the same area of the City within a short time span.

A further suggestion was made to undertake a survey/audit of GP practices to identify any plans to assist future planning provision for GP services, particularly if this was conducted on an annual or biannual basis. It was also noted that the number of single handed GP practices in the City was gradually diminishing through the promotion of initiatives such as co-operation and federation working.

The Chair of the Council's Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission stated that the Commission was currently undertaking a Task Group Review of Primary Care Workforce Planning which included both GP and practice nurses recruitment and retention.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That the CCG's willingness to explore a voluntary local extension to single handed GPs giving more than the national 3 months' notice period to resign be welcomed.
- 3) That the suggestion to undertake an general audit/survey of GPs to better inform future planning provision of services be supported.