The demand for health services is constantly changing. The NHS in Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire is working together to build a healthier future. Now is the time for us get healthier together.

Update

Healthier Together
South East Midlands
Better care *in the right place*

Healthiertogether@miltonkeynes.nhs.uk February/March 2012

People are telling us what they think

In this issue we report on the first of our first stakeholder and public meetings

Involving members of the public and taking account of their views and what they believe is important to them when accessing healthcare services is a key priority for us. That is why we are holding and attending a number of public and stakeholder meetings across the South East Midlands region, from Corby in the north to Luton and Dunstable in the south.

We are asking people if they agree with the case for change that has been developed by local clinicians and patient representatives. We also want to know if they have any views on how their local services can improve.

Many people have already taken the opportunity to let us know what they think, either by coming along to an event or completing and returning the online survey or questionnaire in our booklet, "Why we need to change".

More inside!

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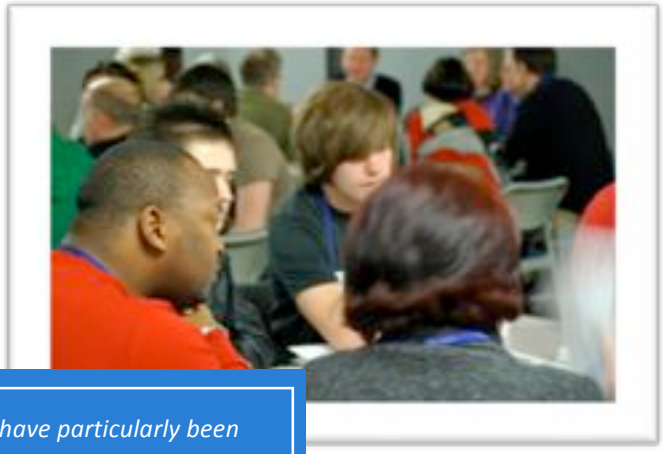

'I have particularly been struck by the high levels of enthusiasm from the participants and their knowledge of the issues we face. There seems to be broad agreement on the proposed strategic direction of the programme.'
Steve Lowden, Chairman, Patient and Public Advisory Group

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People are having their say

The first of our four deliberative public events across the South East Midlands region was held in Wellingborough on 11th February. The people who attended were recruited to reflect the demographic profile of Northamptonshire. You can hear what some of the people who attended had to say about the case for change and the vision for Healthier Together by visiting the home page of our website and listening to the comments recorded on the day.

Our second deliberative public event was held in Milton Keynes on February 25th. Sixty five people attended, ranging in age from 17 to over 75 and from all walks of life. They were recruited to reflect the demographic profile of Milton Keynes.

Asked if they were aware of the pressures faced by the NHS, 74% said they were aware of the growing demands a growing population will place on health services, with only 9% unaware of this. One person said: 'I don't think this is just Milton Keynes where this is happening, there are parts of this area which seeing the same thing.' Also, 77% were aware of the financial and economic pressures the NHS faces, with only 11% unaware of them.

During the morning attendees discussed the case for change presented to them and gave their views on the Healthier Together vision for the future. When asked if they thought there was a case for an ongoing conversation about how health services should be organised in the area 87% said yes with only 7% saying no. Only 2% said felt there should be no change.

We will report on our meetings in Bedford and Luton in our next issue.

What people said in Milton Keynes:

Thinking about the idea of change and where the leadership for this should come from, one person said: 'It is very important that people who do the work drive the changes; doctors, nurses and other clinicians.'

Commenting on the proposals for specialist centres of excellence one participant said: "This is much better than what we have at the moment. We will get a better level of service.' Another said: 'Bringing some services together in one place will make things more efficient'.

Attendees agreed in principle with the idea that some services should be moved out of hospitals and be provided closed to the community, for example, in GP surgeries and local medical centres. But they felt that there needed to be ongoing exploration of what would services it would be feasible to be provided in this way.

You can get involved in so many different ways!

Let's get healthier together – how you can help us

We've started to spread the word about Healthier Together through public meetings, our website, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages, the case for change booklet and monthly updates like this. But there is always more we can do. We need your help to spread the word. We really do want to know what aspects of their NHS services are important to people. Like us on Facebook, share our Tweets, ask your friends to go online to take part in our survey or email us with their views. Your opinion counts!

People's views **are** important

February has been a very busy month in the programme office. We expect the pace to speed up even more moving into March and then April as we try to engage with as many people as possible across the region to obtain their views on a number of issues, including:

1. The case for change and our draft vision for the future
2. Setting out the draft criteria to be used when evaluating the options that will be put forward by the clinical working groups.
3. Examining and commenting on the key drivers developed by the clinical working groups

For many people, this was the first time they had been asked to take part in such an event, and this is reflected in their feedback.

Feedback from Wellingborough

'Today has actually brought a lot of things to light, and made me realise that there are lots of things that do need improving.'

'It's nice to be able to do something proactive towards change, because it's very easy to complain and talk to people about what could happen.'

'*Very interesting – didn't realise that the NHS was in a great need of change – now I realise that it is.'*

'You kind of think these decisions are made by faceless bureaucrats somewhere without people being consulted and obviously that's not the case so it's a good thing.'

'I think it's very useful because there's a lot of different people's opinions being used, and I think other people's views are always more important than just the 'important people' as they say.'

Cont from pg 1

A detailed report will be prepared following this period of engagement, ahead of the formal public consultation later in the year. In the meantime, however, we want to bring you a flavour of the richness and variety of the discussions that we are taking part in.

If you know someone who would like to come along to one of our events, check out the dates on page 4, or if they can't make a meeting, ask them to either complete the online survey via our website our complete the questionnaire in the "Why we need to change" booklet.

If you need more copies of the Why we Need to Change booklet, or would like us to attend a meeting to talk to your group about Healthier Together, please get in touch with us at healthiertogether@miltonkeynes.nhs.uk

Why getting healthier together is the right thing to do

Ed Neale, Medical Director and Consultant Gynaecologist & Obstetrician, Bedford Hospital

Healthier Together is really starting to take shape as we launch our public and patient engagement drive and start work with the six clinical working groups.

I am convinced that the Healthier Together programme is exactly the right thing to do for our population. I know from my day-to-day work with patients that the changes to the way we practice medicine and surgery over the past decade and more have been profound.

As medicine advances so has our profession, with hospital doctors becoming far more specialist much earlier in their careers. Our patients' expectations continue to grow, as they see that more and more is achievable from their NHS and live longer.

'There are so many ideas. The important thing now is to get local people's views about what is most important to them to share with the clinicians leading the programme. That way we can come up with an NHS that is the best it can be for everyone.'

Read more of Ed's blog on our website

Dates of public meetings

Dates of all our public meetings are available on our website.

Thursday 8th March, 10.00am to 12 noon at the Doddridge Centre, Northampton

Friday 16th March, 2.00pm to 4.00pm at the Rufus Centre, Flitwick

Tuesday 20th March, 10.00am to 12 noon at the Corby Cube

Wednesday 21st March, 2.00pm to 4.00pm at the Kettering Conference Centre

Thursday 22nd March, 10.00am to 12 noon at the Bedford Corn Exchange

Tuesday 27th March, 2.00pm to 4.00pm at the Stockwood Discovery Centre, Luton

Friday 30th March, 10.00am to 12 noon at The Gallery, Milton Keynes

Vote in our online poll

Visit our website now to take part in our online poll and get the latest news on Healthier Together

Keep in touch

Email us at: healthiertogether@miltonkeynes.nhs.uk
Follow us on Facebook and Twitter
Check out our website by searching online for Healthier Together South East Midlands

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