

## **Innovation in Primary Care - the Development of a Mutual Company/Social Enterprise**

Development of a project to determine the feasibility to establish a multi professional, not for profit healthcare company to provide and commission local services through practice based commissioning (PBC) to a defined population on behalf of the successor PCT by October 2006

### **1. Where did the project come from?**

Rushcliffe PCT, located in South Nottinghamshire, is a highly rated Trust and has a good relationship with its highly performing GP practices and directly employed staff. It has been developing a number of initiatives in connection with demand management, models of long term condition care and case management and case management. The PCT has recognised that acting locally has been a key to much of its success and wishes to use the opportunities set out in 'Commissioning a Patient Led NHS' to further integrate independent contractors, front line directly employed staff and patients in the process.

Over the last year Rushcliffe Professional Executive Committee (PEC) has considered the current policy agenda and various options and agreed that a social enterprise model based upon the principles of mutualism in primary care affords a coherent and compelling way forward. In advocating a mutual model of business and service provision it foresees a public sector organisation that is lodged in the local community with power in the hands of local people and frontline staff. The company will be characterised by: social enterprise, enterprise, empowerment, accountability, employee participation, community pride and high quality local services.

The key purposes of the company are to:

- Improve the health of the local population
- To provide health provision for the benefit of the community and not for the profit of its members
- Commission effective health services for the constituent population through PBC

### **2. What is the project?**

Since October 2005 a project structure has been implemented to develop a business case and implementation plan, for the approval of stakeholders, of a mutual company to deliver practice based commissioning. A project board has been established to agree, authorise and approve the work of the project work streams and offer strategic guidance and advice. The PCT Board ensure issues regarding probity and governance are addressed and the PEC provides quality assurance. The remit of the three work streams are:

- Business work stream – to agree and develop a business plan and explore the primary care accommodation requirements and support service needs for the company.
- Governance work stream - to address the governance and financial framework for the company to operate within.
- Services work stream - to consider the core services and functions of the company, address the human resource implications for the management of staff and consider a system to manage value for money and contestability.

The proposal is currently described in terms of the current Rushcliffe community services network and population but need not be so limited and be provided to other provider services prepared to adopt the agreed constitution of the Company.

### **3. Key features that have enabled the progress so far.**

- Good working relations between PCT and General Practitioners
- Cohesive, like minded group of GPs
- Clinical engagement from all staff groups
- Active participation from clinical and patient/public leaders
- Support from the existing PCT and SHA
- Ability to build on and accelerate the transformation work to date addressing the challenges of demand management, role design, care pathways and long term conditions.

General Practices and clinicians across Rushcliffe recognise that the current model of acute focussed care is not sustainable and that achieving recurrent balance between service requirements and available resources is the major strategic challenge for the PCT and is only delivered through a comprehensive programme of demand management. Since the project commenced the new out of hospital white paper: 'Our Health Our Care Our Say: a new direction for community services', has been published which further reinforces and reflects the work to date.

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