

## Plymouth Caring Scrutiny

### Out Of Hours (OOH) Primary Medical Services

#### Background

1. One of the commissioning responsibilities of NHS Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (NEW Devon CCG; the CCG) is to ensure that all individuals in the CCG's population are able to access high quality and accessible primary medical services to meet people's urgent needs when their usual GP practice is closed. The normal time periods for this service are 6.30pm to 8am on weekdays, during weekends and also public holidays.
2. NEW Devon CCG holds a contract with Devon Doctors Ltd as provider this service across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.
3. As part of ensuring excellent value for money of our commissioned services, including excellence in quality, Devon Doctors Ltd was asked by NEW Devon CCG to find financial savings (£250,000 per annum, full year effect) as an internal cost improvement plan, whilst consistently ensuring the quality of patient care across Devon, during the overnight period. The overnight period is defined as 11pm to 8am or 8.15am, seven days per week.
4. There are seven treatment centres open overnight across Devon, with all being clinically staffed by one GP overnight with the exception of the Plymouth treatment centre which then had two GPs. The service is run as one across the whole of Devon. A high proportion of patient contacts are telephone contacts with these being handled safely by any treatment centre across Devon county, not necessarily in the treatment centre closest to where the patient lives, thus the treatment centres cross-cover appropriately. Treatment centres do, of course, need to ensure people can attend the centre nearest to where they live or can be attended by a doctor at home in a timely way and this change was not to threaten this.
5. In support of the sought cost saving, NEW Devon CCG agreed Devon Doctors' proposal to reduce the number of GPs covering part of the overnight shift from 8 GPs to 7 GPs between 2am and 8am each night. This change would be realised in the Plymouth treatment centre, thus maintaining the service with one GP instead of the previous two in line with the other 6 treatment centres.
6. Data for 16<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> June 2014 showed activity in the period between 2am and 8am in the Plymouth treatment centre as:

- an average of 1.8 calls per hour (an average of 10.8 in the six hours) concluding in GP advice provided over the telephone
- an average of 0.6 individual visits per hour (an average of 3.6 in the six hours) to the treatment centre
- an average of 0.3 GP visits per hour (an average of 1.8 in the six hours) to a patient's home.

The 2am to 8am period is by far the quietest time for the OOH service. This level of activity would all be provided safely by 7 rather than 8 GPs, particularly noting the ability of the service to share capacity across the whole of Devon.

7. Decision making focused on ensuring the safety and quality of the service which operates across the whole of Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.
8. Devon Doctors consistently meets, and indeed exceeds, the national quality requirements for an out of hours provider. As an out of hours provider Devon Doctors is consistently ranked amongst the best in the UK for both patient satisfaction and performance.
9. The change to 7 rather than 8 GPs for the 2am to 8am period became effective on 13th July 2014.
10. The paper submitted in June 2014 to the Board of the Western Locality of the CCG is attached for reference in Appendix A. In response, the Board wished to be further briefed following implementation of the change in order to remain assured that the service is operating within required safety and quality standards. Devon Doctors had already undertaken to closely monitor the implementation and effect of the change with the lead commissioner in the CCG.
11. Media coverage of out of hours immediately after the Board meeting was of real concern. Safety of patients is paramount to decision making and raised public anxiety unnecessarily.

### Post-implementation analysis and assurance

12. Performance against the service's key performance indicators has remained strong.
13. Since the 14th July, 100% urgent face-to-face consultations were started within target time, and 97% less-urgent face-to-face consultations were started within target time.
14. The table below details activity levels in Plymouth for the entire (11pm to 8am) overnight period. It is proposed that further analysis be presented through presentation at the Caring Scrutiny meeting.

Date	Telephone Advice	Treatment Centre	Home Visit
01/07/2014	25	4	8
02/07/2014	16	7	5
03/07/2014	20	12	5
04/07/2014	38	9	2
05/07/2014	40	22	7
06/07/2014	24	4	2
07/07/2014	17	12	7
08/07/2014	22	13	8

09/07/2014	17	5	8
10/07/2014	16	9	9
11/07/2014	26	9	7
12/07/2014	36	10	6
13/07/2014	17	5	6
14/07/2014	23	5	2
15/07/2014	16	8	0
16/07/2014	28	14	4
17/07/2014	19	6	0
18/07/2014	29	7	2
19/07/2014	36	28	7
20/07/2014	18	11	6
21/07/2014	22	12	4
22/07/2014	25	8	3
23/07/2014	16	7	3
24/07/2014	15	7	3

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15. It should be noted that this change is not related to the fair shares funding debate. There is a consistent, high quality service available to the entire Devon, Plymouth and Torbay population through the OOH service and this continues. The costs and benefits are shared across the whole area so this is about provider efficiency rather than commissioner investment.