

Health Select Committee

A meeting of Health Select Committee was held on Monday, 24th July, 2006.

Present: Cllr Mrs M B Womphrey (Chairman); Cllr C Coombs, Cllr K Dixon, Cllr K Lupton, Cllr Mrs B Robinson, Cllr A B L Sherris.

Officers: G.Birtle, Miss F.Shayler (LD)

Also in attendance: Mrs E Chapman (PPIF), R S Atkinson (CPPIH), Ms K Shah (Consultant in Public Dental Health), Mrs M Shepherd (North Tees Primary Care Trust).

Apologies: were received from Councillors Apedaile, Baker, Harrington, Inman, Mrs Nesbitt, Roberts, Teasdale.

443 Minutes of the meeting held on 26th June

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2006 were agreed as a correct record subject to two minor amendments as noted by the Democratic Services Officer.

444 Review of NHS Dental Provision

Mrs Chapman of the Patient and Public Involvement Forum (PPIF) and Mr Atkinson of the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) had been invited to the meeting to provide views on the changes to NHS Dental Provision. They represented the members of the PPI forum that had been introduced to ensure local people have a say in decisions about local health services. The PPI had statutory powers to ensure that health providers listen to their views.

Mrs Chapman and Mr Atkinson highlighted the main problems for the elderly with regard to the changes to NHS Dental Provision, which were as follows:-

- Transportation
- Charges
- Access to Dental Practices

It was also felt that elderly patients were confused by the new charging policy as insufficient information/advertising had been supplied. Many of the elderly had been patients of dental practices for years and then all of a sudden no longer had a dentist if their practice had gone private. Many were then unsure of what to do and Mrs Shepherd had concerns that some would go without treatment. It was also highlighted that in the previous system reminder cards would be issued to remind patients to make future appointments, this may not happen in the new system and would be up to the discretion of each practice.

Ms Shah, Consultant in Public Dental Health highlighted NICE guidelines regarding routine appointments and stated each patient should not necessarily attend every six months, many are recommending anything between 3 months and two years dependant on the patients dental health.

Mrs Mary Shepherd, PCT, detailed the PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) to Members. PALS was an independent advice and liaison service for

NHS patients. PALS had been assisting patients following the changes to the Dental Service and had been taking calls through the helpline to advise patients of what action to take if they had found themselves without a dentist. The PALS number was advertised in Doctor and Dental Surgeries, Internet, Stockton News etc. If the Dental Surgery was called out of hours the PALS number would be provided as part of their message. Councillors discussed having the PALS telephone number as a link from their Councillor Web Page.

Concluded that the information be noted.

445 Health Scrutiny Support Programme

Members were informed that the Center for Public Scrutiny had extended their offer of 5 days support/training to Members until June 2007. Members felt that it may be useful to use some of the support at the beginning of the next review. The possibility of holding some time for Members following the Election in May 2007 was also discussed.

Concluded that the Scrutiny Officer investigate receiving support/training from the Center for Public Scrutiny towards the start of the next review topic.