

Leeds PCT proposals for procuring a new GP-led Health Centre

In common with every Primary Care Trust in the country, we are currently finalising a service specification for an additional GP-led Health Centre which we aim to have opening around December 2008 or just a little after.

The new centre (and there is to be one in every PCT) will have at its core a high quality General Practice, opening 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week. This will offer routine bookable appointments to non-registered patients, as well as walk-in services to both registered and non registered patients. In this last regard over time the service will be able to dovetail with our plans for the redesign of urgent care provision in Leeds. We wish to have the Centre integrating with diagnostic services (such as blood tests) and in due course with therapy services such as physiotherapy. This will also prove useful to commuters, to those who work full-time and do not wish to take time off work to see their doctor, to those patients who have inappropriately defaulted to over-stretched A+E departments, and finally also to those who cannot access their usual GP, for whatever reason this may be.

We have studied demographic and public health data carefully so that we can use this opportunity to address some of our existing health inequalities, attend to unmet patient needs, provide fairly central access for a patients who may commute into the city centre and wish to see a GP without taking a day off work, and to reduce inappropriate or unnecessary A+E attendance. In addition, the closure of the Dr. Potts practice in Burmantofts has also increased the need for additional capacity in that area of the city.

We have been disappointed with the misleading media coverage which could result in unnecessary concern for patients and the public. We are not building a polyclinic and NHS services are not being privatised. The NHS has always funded services provided by independent contractors such as GPs and will continue to do so. Patients do not have to pay for these services and the NHS sets high standards about the quality of the care that is provided.

We anticipate that around 1,000 patients will register at the Centre over the first year, nothing like the 50, 000 that has been suggested in recent reports.

We are finalising our financial assumptions and projections for this project. However, we can confirm that the Centre will cost significantly less than the £1 million that has been claimed. All funding will be additional to that already spent on GP services in Leeds and will result in an improvement in primary care services for the city.

Leeds Primary Care Trust is committed to developing high quality local GP practices for everyone in the city. This year we will be spending more on contracts with our GP practices than ever before and we are pleased to be able to do so. The new Centre will build on existing services and has real potential for bringing about change in the accessibility of Primary Care services.

We are mindful of the need to undertake a fair, open and transparent procurement programme. We have a rigorous and clinically-led evaluation process, and will only select a provider who offers accessible, quality, safe, effective services. Financial implications of any bid are of course taken into consideration, but absolutely not in any way to compromise the necessary quality of services. We will welcome bids from local GPs and from other suitable providers and are very keen to ensure that any provider has strong clinical leadership and can truly deliver a GP-led Health Centre as a model of clinical provision.