SUPPORTING GENERAL PRACTICE

As CCG member practices, your understanding of the needs of our patients is what informs much of the improvement and development work that we undertake as a CCG. We aim to support you to support your patients, so this year we put in place the following measures:

> the £1 per head funding for improving patient services was delegated directly to GP commissioners in each locality, so that it can be spent on the priority needs you have identified in your own local area. We are the only CCG in our area to have taken this step

> we developed the over-75s health check as a means to committing more primary care resources to meeting the needs of this vulnerable patient group - preventing future health crises

> we have planned and funded a number of public communications campaigns, to raise awareness of alternative sources of health advice and information, in order to reduce the pressure on primary care. These include:
  
  o mail shot on QEII service changes and the new UCC to 140,000 homes
  o Where do I go? advice placed in the county-wide residents’ magazine and parenting publications
  o NHS 111 radio advertisements

> a dedicated member of staff, based in the quality team, has been recruited to staff the contract hotline, helping to resolve the difficult issues you and your colleagues encounter in the local health system

> working with local carers charities, we have developed the carers’ champions support scheme in GP practices across our area and most practices now have an active carer champion

> the CCG’s GP bulletin is now issued regularly every fortnight, consolidating all the non-urgent information that practices need to reduce email traffic, and assisting practices by advertising vacancies for free
our engagement team has worked throughout the year to promote projects which encourage patients to manage their health conditions. Through our partnership with the charity Diabetes UK, we are establishing a network of peer support groups for patients with Type 2 diabetes, and every patient with the condition has been given a self-care information pack.

> following our antibiotic resistance awareness event, patient groups have been spreading the message about the limitations of antibiotics across the area.

**DRIVING STRATEGIC CHANGE**

**Joint Commissioning**

2014/15 has been a notable year for the CCG in terms of affecting change across the east and north of Hertfordshire. We have been approved as joint commissioners of primary care services with NHS England, which means that in future local clinicians will have much more involvement in deciding how GP services should be delivered. This is a significant step for the CCG and we have made a number of changes to our constitution in preparation for the joint commissioning arrangement. A new joint committee has been established with the area team, including representation from Hertfordshire’s Health and Wellbeing Board, to oversee commissioning arrangements. To ensure that the governance of the new commissioning model is robust, we have updated our conflicts of interest policy and training programmes, in readiness for the new arrangements.

**Primary Care Strategy**

Led by GPs, we are in the final phases of developing our primary care strategy to ensure the provision of high quality and sustainable local primary care and community services. This strategy sets out our vision to deliver integrated physical and mental health and social care in the community, which patients’ needs in the most appropriate setting.

Localities are developing their own individual transformational plans that best meet the needs of their local population, making best use of the local existing health and social care infrastructure.

**Care home improvement – successful ‘vanguard’ project bid**

You may have heard on the national news that our ambitious improvement plans to transform the support for care home residents - put forward with Hertfordshire County
Council and the Hertfordshire Care Providers Association - have won national approval from NHS England.

Chosen from amongst 269 bids as one of the most innovative in the country, our successful bid means that we will be able to draw on expert help and a £200m fund to improve the care offered to the area’s 3,000 care home residents.

**Winter schemes money**

This year’s £5m winter pressure money, funded by our CCG and NHS England, paid for a number of schemes in many of your practices. From more practice nurse home visits, longer or additional GP clinics, and increased visits to your frail and elderly patients in care homes, your schemes have made a positive difference this winter.

**AIHVS**

The acute in-hours GP home visiting service, which was operating as a pilot scheme, will become part of the core contract from April 1, for one year. Further development of the service will take place as part of an integrated service with GP out-of-hours and NHS 111.

**Quality Premium**

Due to our strong performance and that of our providers, our CCG gained more from the Quality Premium fund than any of the other 14 CCGs in our region. Our governing body decided to delegate the £1.3m secured in this way directly to individual practices, so that you and your colleagues could decide how to drive up quality, increase access to GP services, reduce health inequalities and improve premises, to benefit your patients.

**Investment in Home Care**

We invested an additional £5m in home care support this year, which has had a very positive impact on the ability of local hospitals to discharge patients appropriately when their treatment is complete. Delays in the transfer of care to the community are down significantly on last year, helping to ease the winter pressures which affect the hospital trusts’ capacity to treat vulnerable patients when they require hospital admission. We have also extended the multi-disciplinary HomeFirst ‘hospital from home’ scheme to the North Herts locality, helping to avoid preventable hospital admissions.

**The New QEIi Hospital**
Work on the £30m New QEII Hospital in Welwyn Garden City is progressing well and the building is on track for completion in late spring. It is a modern and welcoming place for local people to access the hospital services that they use most often, including:

> a 24h Urgent Care Centre, treating adults and children with minor illnesses and injuries
> general outpatient services
> diagnostics (MRI, CT scans and X-rays)
> rapid assessment for patients whose health needs to be urgently assessed, but who don’t need to be admitted to hospital
> a purpose-built area for integrated children’s outpatient services
> therapy services, including physiotherapy and other rehabilitation treatments
> endoscopy and other procedures
> a breast unit
> ante-natal care
> routine blood treatments.

We are working with the local branch of the Royal Voluntary Service to co-ordinate a new volunteer group, to welcome and assist patients and carers.

**New care home on the QEII site**

GPs told us that a care home is needed on the QEII site, to meet local needs. We have worked with the county council to commission a high-quality building with homely, flexible accommodation, designed to be ‘dementia-friendly’, with a gym and rehabilitation space. We are working with the provider for the home to bring this project to fruition as soon as possible.

**Procurement of IVF services**

East and North Hertfordshire CCG has procured a flexible IVF contract on behalf of 19 CCGs from across a wide area. The new contract is in line with NICE guidelines and offers an improved service, with more local clinics, that can better address the needs of women with fertility problems.

**Children’s mental health services review**

The CCG is working with partners across health, education and social care, to review child and adolescent mental health services, with the intention of improving access to services, outcomes and streamline processes.

**March 2015**