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1 February 2011

Cluster PCT leadership arrangements

Many of you will be aware that as the NHS Operating Framework for 2011/12 and Sir David Nicholson's latest letter to the NHS about transition from the current NHS system to the new ways of working signalled, we are now moving towards a cluster arrangement for primary care trusts across our region.

The purpose of this is to build in resilience for the next couple of years, focusing on securing great quality, financial and other performance outcomes. We also need to build commissioning expertise and support for emerging general practice commissioning consortia, and accelerate effective joint arrangements with local authorities system as quickly as possible.

In practice the cluster arrangement means there will be a single primary care trust (PCT) chief executive and just one primary care trust executive team for each county in the South East Coast region (which covers Sussex, Kent and Surrey).

Following a robust process, we are pleased to let you know that Amanda Fadero has been appointed to lead the cluster in Sussex as the designate Chief Executive and accountable officer for all the constituent county PCTs in this area (ie NHS Brighton and Hove, NHS West Sussex, NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald, and NHS Hastings and Rother).

We are also pleased to let you know that Ann Sutton has been appointed as the designate Chief Executive for Kent (encompassing NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent, NHS West Kent, and NHS Medway).

You may be aware that NHS Surrey operates as a single PCT across the county and therefore already matches the county cluster arrangement. The recently appointed PCT

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chief executive, Anne Walker, is confirmed as the chief executive to lead Surrey through the transition period.

Feedback from the appointments panel (which comprised the Strategic Health Authority chief executive and deputy chief executive, primary care trust chairs, local authority, NHS trust and GP leaders from the region) was that they believed they were 'spoilt for choice' in terms of impressive, able and committed existing chief executives from each of our PCTs.

We would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the sterling leadership John Wilderspin has given in West Sussex and Mike Wood has given in East Sussex over recent years. We are confident that the new leadership arrangements will build on the successes and foundations they have put in place, as well as continuing to make improvements in Brighton and Hove, in delivering the next phase of better health and care for our residents across Sussex.

The precise date of handing over accountable officer responsibilities is yet to be agreed, but will be in place by 1 April 2011. Amanda is now considering the cluster executive team arrangements. Importantly, we will also be working with the strategic health authority to develop simple but effective governance arrangements and to determine the board governance approach for Chairs and Non Executive Directors. Our aim is to create the environment for success for patients, citizens and staff as we head towards the reformed health and social care system to local needs and priorities.

We will of course keep you updated with progress on this over the coming weeks, and look forward to continuing to work with you to deliver better health and care for the people of Sussex.

Yours faithfully

Norman Robson
Chair
NHS West Sussex

Denise Stokoe
Chair
NHS Brighton and Hove

Charles Everett
Chair
NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald and NHS Hastings and Rother

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