

Updates from Councillor Clucas

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee - 3 November 2015

The meeting received a presentation in relation to the CCG Inspection report of the Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust. All services were covered: 7 Community hospitals, dentistry, Adult Care, Sexual Health, Minor Injuries. It was recognised that the Trust is still 'finding its feet'. The inspectors remarked that it still felt 'new' to them.

Areas of concern were: last year of life care; some safety issues that have been addressed, record keeping, unregistered practitioners – that is staff acting beyond their level of competence.

Improvement is required in the following areas:

Training
Systems
Governance
Staff numbers

Some good practice was also found:

Community hospitals – strong, caring culture;
Falls prevention;
Sexual Health;
Dental service – use of specialist equipment;
Seven day service in Community Children's Team;
Volunteers in hospitals.

There were a number of matters that seemed common through this report and through the other reports that were discussed – Out of Hours Service and SWAST – Committee agreed with my request for a further report looking at staffing and recruitment into the services and projecting forward five years.

It is likely that the number of doctors retiring over the next few years will have a significant impact on local services. This was to be the main point of discussion at a meeting of Gloucester GPs this month. This is particularly important as there are real difficulties recruiting nurses and doctors to specific services and paramedics also. Some concern had been expressed at the lack of training places for paramedics in the region. SWAST was training Emergency Care Assistants to Paramedic status to improve the numbers available.

There are gaps in other services: Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Dentistry are short of professional staff. We were informed that patients can wait 6 months for a dental appointment, whereas the recommended period for physiotherapy for recovering stroke patients is three 45 minute sessions a week, most were receiving only 1 period a week. This was delaying recovery and causing discharge problems. A similar situation exists in Occupational Therapy.

Some disquiet was expressed about the Prime Minister's Challenge Fund which has caused doctors who worked for the Out of Hours Service to transfer to the Challenge Fund.

Economic Development Scrutiny Committee - 16 November 2015

The Scrutiny Committee received presentations from three areas that had received funding from the LEP:

Berkley Green

Gloscol STEM Project

University of Gloucester Cyber Skills Centre

The three presentations examined the history of the projects, student numbers, economic impact and local skills and employment.

There were a number of factors that were common to all of the project areas that I raised questions about. These included:

Gender ratio male/female in projects;

The need for public money and whether projects were self-sustaining;

Impact in the local economy;

SMEs ability to recruit qualified personnel.

A report is to be produced by each project in the New Year in relation to questions raised and I also asked for the impact of the cut in funding for Gloscol to be factored in. This will have a real impact on outcomes for the College and for students.

Other areas that were discussed included age profiles, employment prospects, outcomes for each area of spend and the influence that schools have on students' choices of apprenticeships or university.

Some of these issues were discussed in terms of devolution. However, the government has 'red lined' skills training and will not be devolving it to the county, although other devolved areas will have it.