

**HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL**

**2 FEBRUARY 2015**

**GP Practices in Middlesbrough – Discussion**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To present the panel with an outline of the purpose of the meeting.

**BACKGROUND**

**Variations in the delivery of the NHS Health Check and in the management of patients with Long Term Conditions**

2. Members will recall that in November 2014 the panel received information about the NHS Health Check, the Government's national illness prevention programme to identify people 'at risk' of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease or vascular dementia. At that meeting the panel were informed that whilst in Middlesbrough the target of 50% of eligible individuals undergoing an initial assessment had been reached, it was highlighted that more focus was needed in areas of deprivation. It became apparent from the discussions that there didn't seem to be a consistent approach by all GP practices in the delivery of the healthy heart check. Every eligible individual should be invited within a 5 year period and this did not appear to be the case.
3. The panel agreed to invite Dr John Canning, Secretary of the Cleveland Local Medical Committee to a round table discussion about this to ascertain the position in Middlesbrough. In addition to this issue, the topic has been widened to involve a discussion whether or not there are variations within practices of the management of patients with long term conditions.

**Additional issues for discussion**

4. Whilst Dr Canning is attending this meeting, it was considered prudent to also discuss some other issues where the panel had heard evidence recently which had caused concern with regard to GP practices in Middlesbrough. Nationally, the Royal College of General Practitioners has identified 543 GP practices out of the 8,000 in England it believes could be forced to shut in the next year as they all have more than 90% of their doctors aged over 60 (the average retirement age is 59).<sup>1</sup> This meeting will be the opportunity to ascertain the position in Middlesbrough and ask Dr Canning if there any

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ageing GPs 'may force practices to close' BBC News 2 October 2014

practices at risk of closure due to GPs retiring and whether or not Middlesbrough is experiencing any difficulty in recruiting GPs to the area. If that is the case then what is being done to alleviate the problem and plan for future demand.

5. In addition to this, Dr Canning has been asked to comment on whether or not the proposals for GP practices to open longer hours/or provide weekend opening hours will help with the demand for GP appointments and consider what effect this will have on GPs workload and general morale. Nationally Dr Richard Vautrey, of the British Medical Association, has stated 'GPs are being asked to more for less, the government is talking about seven-day services, but at the moment doctors are struggling to provide good quality care during core hours'.<sup>2</sup>

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. It is recommended that the position be noted, unless Members agree there are areas which need further investigation

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No background papers were used in this report.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Is there really a crisis among GPs?' – BBC News 4 November 2014