

**MINUTES OF THE OPEN MEETING OF
READING REFERENCE COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2003
AT THE UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTRE
2PM**

PRESENT: Drs Mittal, Naran, Bindra, Johnson, Latchford, Gargav & Denny
Dr Christopher Tiarks
Helen Waddams and Richard Mills

APOLOGIES: Dr Morris
Jane Solomon
James Bywater, David Thomson & Janet Fitzgerald

ACTION

RDG 1/10/03 Minutes of July Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2003 were approved.

Matters Arising

None not on the agenda.

RDG 2/10/03 OOHs

Richard Mills whose responsibility is for OOHs in the East of the county updated the Committee of the current situation.

He emphasised the point of how much the present high quality service was valued and that the PCTs wished to build upon this. The three West of County PCTs were looking for a West of Berkshire solution of a hub and spoke provider based on two Primary Care Centres, one in Reading and one in Newbury but not incorporating Wokingham. He said that no decision had been made yet upon the provider, it could be the current provider or another private provider depending on bids and the money available to provide the service.

Each PCT PEC had produced a specification, which had generally been agreed in a briefing document and responses were awaited from definitive providers. It will be likely that the final model will involve an increased use of nurses.

PJ made the point that although the current consultation document spoke a lot about clinical governance and the theory of OOHs provision, there was little or no guidance as to what the shape of service would look like after its introduction. The Committee this was a serious gap which needs to be filled before anybody could begin to cost in detail the service that would be provided. RM replied that he needed to wait for responses from providers before the matter could be taken forward. There remains therefore, a basic difference of opinion between the PCT and the members of the Committee as to the best way of clarifying the future.

The amount of funds available to the PCT was not yet clear, although

could roughly be based on £9,000 per annum per GP. It looked as if the vast amount of GPs were going to opt-out of providing services and it was as yet unclear as to what doctor input would be necessary in the new service. The Committee asked RM when the introduction was likely to happen and contractors given the ability to opt-out. He replied that the target was 1 April, but he personally thought the deadline was too tight and the most likely date would be at the end of September or beginning of October 2004. Everybody acknowledged that starting a completely new service on 1 January 2005 would be inappropriate.

The Committee members thanked RM for the information and re-emphasised their anxieties about the lack of clarity of the shape of the service to come and the implications that would have for the patients OOHs and for the practices in-hours should the service not be up to scratch. The Committee looked forward to having further information as soon as possible.

Issues Raised by Local Practices

Preparation Payments – The Committee raised their concerns about the proposed withholding of some preparation payments for PMS Practices and told HM that they were writing to Janet Fitzgerald and the practices around their concerns.

IT – The Committee informed the PCT about the anxieties entertained by all GPs around the way in which the government's IT policy was not being implemented correctly. Serious concerns remained about the 100% reimbursement of maintenance payments, promises to the profession and the definition and funding of minor upgrades. The Committee members took the view that if the maintenance payments did not occur by 31 March, they would be making claims against the PCT through the small claims courts.

Non Principal Appraisal – The Committee members informed the PCT about their continuing concerns of non principals not being in the distribution list of the PCT, Non Principals are an increasingly important part of the workforce and must be privy to current policy and changes to the shape of services. They told HW that they would be writing to the Chief Executive on this matter.

PCT Agenda Items

Accommodation Charges Review – HW said that it was still work in hand and no conclusions had yet been reached.

Network Development – HW reminded the Committee that they were trying to establish five networks in Reading based on groups of practices and this was still at the consultation stage and meetings are to be held in November and December with practices around the proposals. Each network had a PCT Director responsible for it and the streams of work included waiting list management and devolved budgets. The Committee realised that this looked like reintroduction of multi funds from fund holding days. There will be health needs

assessments carried out in each of the networks.

nGMS/PMS Implementation & Progress – HW reported that there was a group looking at all the details of implementation and the effects on PMS and that the LMC Officers were sitting on these groups.

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 10 December at 2pm

Room G7, Reading PCT