

People Scrutiny Committee – 29th November 2016

Public Questions

Question from Mr Webb to the Executive Councillor for Health & Adult Social Care

Question 1

“On Friday 29th July, The Westborough Road Surgery was closed due to the doctor retiring at short notice to the patients. Many patients did not receive the letter notifying them of this and did give alternatives information of other surgeries than the Carnarvon Road surgery which is too far too walk for young families and elderly patients. Do you think that locum doctor’s should have been put in place for a month for a better transition and more time to inform and give patients time to adjust and find more suitable closer surgery?”

Answer (Cllr Salter / NHS Southend CCG)

Ordinarily a single-handed GP that operates a GMS (General Medical Services) contract, such as the GP at the Westborough Road Surgery, would have to give three months’ notice if they wish to terminate their contract. However due to extenuating circumstances and in agreement with NHS England and NHS Southend Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), it was mutually agreed by all parties that the termination would be actioned within 24 hours.

It was not possible for locum doctors to deliver a service from the Westborough Road Surgery for a month as the GP had terminated their practice contract and this included the use of these premises, which they owned.

Staff at NHS Southend CCG worked with the GP to prepare and send letters to patients as soon as the GP’s resignation was received which was the day of the closure, Friday 29 July. The intention was that they would reach most patients by either Saturday morning or Monday morning. Letters were sent to households rather than individual patients.

It was the prime focus of both NHS England and NHS Southend CCG to ensure that patients had continued access to primary medical services and they were not left without a GP practice. Once the surgery closed at 6.30pm on the Friday, patients could still use NHS 111 for out of hours access as normal. From Monday morning at 8am, patients had full access to Carnarvon Medical Centre where their electronic record was instantly accessible.

In addition, a member of CCG staff was present at Westborough Road Surgery from 7.30am on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. This ensured that any patients who turned up for an appointment were informed of the closure personally and then redirected to Carnarvon Medical Centre, where their appointment would be maintained.

Southend CCG had to make alternative arrangements for patients of Westborough Road Surgery in a very short time frame. The CCG was very pleased that the Carnarvon Medical Centre was able to accommodate the additional patients at short notice and that it had the capacity and infrastructure to expand.

The Carnarvon Medical Centre is only 1.2 miles from Westborough Road surgery and, on a national level; this would not be considered an unreasonable alternative. However, any patient who wanted to choose to register with another practice was able to do so, which has happened in some cases.

Question from Mr Webb to the Executive Councillor for Children & Learning

Question 2

“Chase High School has increased the number of pupils passing A – C grades from A-C from 25% to 39.3%.”

Question – “How did other secondary schools make progress in A – C grades in maths & English including grammar schools from 2015 – 2016, which schools did not make progress and what is Southend Council going to put in place to ensure a higher progress in the pass rate in A-C grades in English and Maths by next year?”

Answer

I am delighted for the opportunity to congratulate Chase High School and the majority of other schools that improved their GCSE results in the summer.

Overall, the performance of schools in Southend showed continued improvement. You will be aware that the headline measures of performance changed in 2016, and so direct year on year comparison is not simple.

The question refers to A – C grades in maths & English, which is not one of the new required accountability measures, so I have used the old benchmark figure of 5+ GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths. Overall Southend schools improved their performance to 64.8% and

remain 8% points above the national average, seven schools were also above the national figure of 56.8%. There were five schools whose results, measured by this benchmark, did not improve from 2015. This information is not yet validated or in the public domain, and therefore I am not able to name the individual schools, this is included in the January DfE release.

I must emphasize the changing role of the Local Authority in school improvement, with 11 of our 12 secondary schools being academies. Where a school is an academy, the responsibility lies with the leadership teams and the governing body.

In addition to the Council's continuing statutory role of monitoring performance of all schools, we will be working with all of our schools through the newly formed Education Board to help, assist and drive forward improvement for all pupils, to ensure that they attend a good or outstanding school, which in turn will lead to better outcomes at examination. Where it is necessary to do so, we will work with the Regional Schools Commissioner to intervene and work with other schools in the town and surrounding areas to ensure that that improvement is forthcoming.