

GP Services in Barnet - Brunswick Park Health Centre and Finchley Memorial Hospital

1 Background

As part of the national re-organisation of the NHS, Primary Care Trusts were abolished and the North Central London Cluster closed down on 31 March 2013. New organisations were created to assume the Cluster's commissioning functions and responsibilities have been divided between:

- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- NHS England
- NHS Property Services Ltd

Some functions have also gone to Public Health England and to Local Authorities.

One of the functions of NHS England is to commission primary care services i.e. GP, Dental, Community Pharmacy and Optical services directly. This function is carried out through Local Area Teams. In London these cover North, Central and East London; North West London and South London. The area team funds GP practices to provide medical services and also reimburses certain overhead costs including rent, rates and clinical waste services.

NHS Property Services Ltd has been established to manage all the former Primary Care Trust estate not transferred directly to NHS Trusts and provides strategic and operational management of NHS owned or leased property. This includes responsibility for the management of Brunswick Park Health Centre. As such they are responsible for agreeing lease and service charge with the local GP practices.

2 Brunswick Park

Whilst the Brunswick Park Health Centre refurbishment was completed in January 2013, the Cluster failed to secure lease agreements with the practices to move back into the centre. NHS England and NHS Property Services remain committed to the former Cluster's plans for the Health Centre, i.e. to relocate two local practices (Drs Lakhani and Okonkwo) into the Centre. This will now provide additional capacity for the practices to grow and offer a wider range of services.

NHS England is aware that the practices have expressed concerns over a lack of communication about the move and increased cost of service charges at the Centre. In order to resolve these concerns we will be meeting with the practices on 8 May 2013 to discuss their relocation and concerns about the service charges. This will include providing clarity about why the charges have increased and what costs can be reimbursed. We note these service charges have been reported widely in the press but believe those reports to have been inaccurate – the increase is of the order of £6000 given that charge was last calculated in 2009/10 on a smaller area occupied by the GPs. We will also discuss the potential for the practices to increase income by extending their list and providing additional services.

NHS England and NHS Property Services note that one of the local GPs has expressed an interest in purchasing the centre and is concerned about how this matter was managed by the Cluster. We intend to review this matter and follow up discussions with the GP.

3 Finchley Memorial

The building is built and partly vacant. The space provided for two GP practices is vacant with a (currently void) cost. The Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) proposed solution is to offer to each practice (Cornwall House and Squires Lane Surgeries) £6k per room for 15 years. The practices' running costs will increase considerably and they have been reluctant to move. The CCG commits to covering increased costs of the increased occupancy payments to NHS England. The practices seemed content with this position. The former NHS Cluster had not been able to close agreements securing the move of the two practices. A Section 96 arrangement seems to be a way forward. We are aware of the urgency and the obvious service benefits of relocating practices to state of the art premises – access, environment, new service opportunities, growth etc. NHS England is looking at ways of securing the move of the practices.

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