

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Health Select Commission
2.	Date:	14th July, 2011
3.	Title:	The future of PALS at the Health Advice Centre
4.	Directorate:	NHS Rotherham Patient and Public Relations

5. Summary

Almost 80% of contacts to PALS are by telephone, email or letter. The remaining 20% constitute drop-in callers primarily from people accessing Rotherham Community Health Services or EU migrants as part of a document checking service. RCHS is now under the management of the Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust and the document checking service is now managed by GPs. This means that the numbers of drop-in enquiries are likely to reduce over the coming months.

For staff security reasons, there are always two members of PALS staff present when the centre is open. This means that the centre is forced to operate restricted opening times and is vulnerable to frequent ad-hoc closures due to lack of staff availability. This creates an inconsistent and unreliable service for patients and the public.

The proposal is to relocate PALS from Rotherham Community Health Centre to Oak House with the aim of improving the responsiveness and quality of the PALS telephone service. At Oak House the issue of staff security is negated and other NHS staff in the building will be supported to deal with the more frequent requests for information (80% telephone contacts request help for emergency dental treatment).

6. Recommendations

That the Health Select Commission:

Understand the rationale for relocating the service and support the proposal.

7. Finance

Some minimal costs will be incurred due to staff travel expenses although there will also be reductions in this area. There may be opportunities for income generation on the space vacated but there are no firm plans at this stage.

8 Risks and Uncertainties

The vast majority of contacts are by telephone which will be handled in the same way as the current service provision. A free phone service (existing provision – no financial implications) direct to PALS will operate from RCHC and both joint service centres.

9 Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

None

10 Background Papers and Consultation

Staff consultation, NHS Rotherham Board and Commissioning Executive Committee approval, JSCNC and discussions with trade unions. Health Scrutiny Select Commission.

11 Contact

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