

Notes from Somerset GP Board meeting. 18th December 2019

The last meeting of the decade was fuelled by mince pies and proved productive. In addition to the standard business, we discussed the following:

Workforce

A significant constraint on protecting or developing services in the county is the workforce situation. The Local Workforce Action Board (LWAB) is now focussing on Primary Care and holding an event on January 11th to which the LMC/SGPB are invited. We discussed how the current training of GPs doesn't always adequately prepare them for life in the new NHS and factors that might influence this. We also discussed the GMC report published this week that shows significant numbers of GPs planning to reduce their working hours or leave the profession completely within the next few years, and how this will influence current thinking relating to the Same Day Urgent Care (SDUC) strategy, for example.

Training Hub Funding Bid

The Board agreed a funding proposal from the Training Hub to provide training in group consultations. These have already proved successful, and many practices have indicated that they would like to use group consultations for pre-diabetics, amongst other conditions.

Membership of Leadership Groups

We routinely discuss meetings that members have attended in the past month, and the Chair is now a regular member of several Leadership groups including the Partnership Executive Group (PEG) and the Somerset System leadership Board (SSLB). Whilst other GPs might be present at these (usually via a CCG role), the Board recognised the importance of preserving the representation of a GP provider voice at the highest level. There will be a necessary change in personnel next Spring when both the current Chair and Secretary of the GP Board retire, and we discussed how they might be replaced bearing in mind developments of the Clinical Directors' group (see below).

Clinical Director (CD) Development

We had a report on the Clinical Directors' group which is meeting on a regular basis and appears to be forming into a cohesive structure. They even have a name- the 'Green Ring'. The plan is for a subgroup of this to become members of the GP Board, and possibly be in a position to take a wider role within the health and care system leadership. We also discussed how the future shape and leadership of the GP Board might look in the coming months.

Primary Care Network Development

There was largely positive news about the PCN development in the county. CCG colleagues who know what is happening elsewhere in the region report that Somerset overall appears to be ahead of the game, although some PCNs are finding it harder to get going than others. The wider system in Somerset has proved supportive: Ian Creek and the Training Hub have been coordinating development, the CCG is providing help through the PCN development programme, the Alliance Trust (T&S and SomPar) has engaged with the CDs through their 'relationship managers', and there is a Trust initiative, 'Improving Lives through Neighbourhoods' project, which is working across three PCNs initially (Bridgwater, CLIC and West Mendip) and aiming for early and visible successes in co-ordinated work on high users of services to reduce the impact this group have on both Primary and Secondary care services.

The next meeting will be on January 15th.