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Our Ref:  
Date: 10<sup>th</sup> July 2008

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To All GPs across Stockport PCT

Dear Colleague

### **GP LED HEALTH CENTRE**

**Please Can You take 5 Minutes to Read this Communication**

I know that there is some concern in the local GP community about PCT plans to establish a new 8-8 GP Led Health Centre. Some of this might be fuelled by the challenging conversations that are taking place between the BMA and National government. I do not want to comment on any of that debate but simply want to set down what we are (and are not) doing in the Stockport economy. The PCT does recognise and value the generally excellent relationship we have with the local GP community but there are things we simply need to do given Government policy to improve access to primary care services which I would hope we can all agree with.

As you are aware an engagement process is taking place to ascertain your views (and views of other stakeholders and the local population) on a new GP Led Health Centre which is being commissioned in Stockport. This procurement is part of The Equitable Access in Primary Medical Care (EAPMC) programme resulting from the NHS Next Stage Review Interim Report (October 2007) carried out by Lord Darzi. You will be aware that each PCT is required to commission a new GP led health centre. The DoH website has further information about the centres and procurement process.

We are aware that GPs naturally have concerns, which we need to understand and discuss and we are meeting regularly with the LMC to discuss the issue. It is equally important that you have up to date and accurate information about the proposed new development, and I hope that this letter will provide some useful background information for you and possibly overcome the misunderstandings that are about at the moment.

### **Specification**

The core of the specification has been set by the Department of Health. (Gateway Ref: 9194). The Core Criteria (Appendix 1) and Principles (Appendix 11) are attached. All centres will need to offer :



Chairman: Mr M.J Greenwood CBE    Chief Executive: Mr R. Popplewell  
Professional Executive Committee Chair: Dr D. Dawson  
[www.stockport-pct.nhs.uk](http://www.stockport-pct.nhs.uk)

- Core GP services
- Easily accessible location
- Open 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week, 365 days/year
- Bookable GP appointments and walk in services
- Able to see patients who are registered with the practice and those registered elsewhere
- GP led

### **Stockport's GP-Led Health Centre**

The new GP led health centre is about providing additional primary care services and aims to complement the excellent primary care provision we have in Stockport.

One of the Government's aims of the new GP led Health Centres is to offer patients more choice by having primary care services available at times which may be more convenient, e.g. at weekends or the evening.

Within the national specifications, and taking into account local need and the fact that Stockport has an excellent provision of GP services, Stockport PCT has set a specification for our Health Centre which is:

1. A small registered population focussed on 'hard to reach groups'

The registered element of the new health centre will be small and is targeted at 'hard to reach' groups such as people who are homeless, travellers etc, and the registered element of the service will therefore be small (less than 1% of the total population across Stockport). These people will predominantly be patients who are currently not accessing GP services and who are often have significant unmet health needs.

We do not anticipate that this will have a significant impact on existing practices, as the numbers that we will commission from the new service are small. One of the concerns that GPs have raised is how the PCT will 'control' registration at the centre. This will be underpinned by the contract, key performance indicators (ensuring the focus on hard to reach groups) and payment structure – there will be a set number of patient registrations within the contract. The contract will be performance managed and the provider would not be able to exceed levels without prior agreement of the PCT.

2. Walk in and bookable appointments for unregistered patient

The centre will offer appointments and drop in services for those who are not registered with the centre – this will be the major element of the service. Again, this will provide additionality and will not impact on existing general practice but will enable people to access advice, treatment and care at convenient times. The aim is to divert inappropriate A&E attendances and provide a service for minor ailments and injuries. Also available will be: blood tests, CVD screening, smoking cessation advice, alcohol brief interventions, contraception advice etc. This is additional capacity and can compliment existing primary care provision. Where patients attend the Walk-In Centre, documentation will be sent back to practices electronically.



3. Town centre based

The new centre will be based in the town centre, in a visible location which is important for the walk-in centre element. It is possible that the service will move to the new St Thomas' community centre in due course to align the services with those provided there.

**Primary Care – extended hours**

As well as this additional capacity planned within the GP Led Health centre we are also asking for views on how we continue to expand capacity within local practices, particularly building on the excellent work we have done so far in commissioning the new extended hours. In the engagement questionnaire one of the areas we are seeking views on is how we expand capacity out in localities, and the PCT will be looking to extend this further.

I hope that this information is useful. I would be happy to discuss this in more detail.

Finally, we would like to ask you to work with us to make the best use of this additional primary care capacity for patients and practices in Stockport.

Yours sincerely

Richard Popplewell  
Chief Executive

