

Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 12 th February 2020 PCN's service specifications - discussion	Item No 7
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OUTLINE

This issue was drawn to our attention by Hackney Keep Our NHS Public. Here is the request from Shirley Murgraff on 14 Jan:

Dear Members of Health in Hackney

Further to my previous email about NHSE's draft service specifications for PCNs, I am sending herewith for your information a copy of the email sent to NHSE by Hackney Keep Our NHS Public which includes, as you will see below, some of the information I received from some of Hackney's health professionals. Other organisations are considering sending their own versions of this and other information. I hope HiH Scrutiny will find it possible to make its voice heard on this really important matter.

All best

Shirley M.

Dear NHS England

We have had sight of your draft service specifications for the implementation of the Primary Care Networks (PCNs).

*We are writing to express our deep concern and dismay that the "consultation" on these highly significant and important changes to the delivery of Primary Care was scheduled to begin on December 23rd, two days before Christmas, and end on January 15th. This provides **a realistic total of only 11.5 working days** to consider, arrange meetings about, and reach and collate conclusions on an extremely important 35-page document; and at very best that total could only add a further - albeit unlikely - three working days to 14.5. In our opinion, by no stretch of the imagination can either total remotely meet NHSE's own guidelines which state : **"Allow adequate time for the public to consider and respond before a final decision is made."***

*The specifications make several references to several millions of pounds of "funding entitlements" which "come(s) on top of increases to the core practice contract", but tucked away in one sentence only is the very clear statement **"Funding is not allocated directly for delivery of the service specifications" (my emphasis)** - and that is the crucial point isn't it?. After decades of acknowledged underfunding for the NHS in general, and several years of annually decreasing funding for Primary Care, it is not just unfair but unrealistic and entirely inappropriate and unacceptable - and not necessary either! - to require General Practitioners to source new expenditures from existing budgets. This is even more the case when, while you are claiming the PCNs*

will be reducing the GP workload, the specifications clearly add to an already significantly overloaded workforce suffering additionally from serious staffing shortages along with recruitment and retention problems. This is regrettably yet another example of NHS staff being expected and required to do more for less.

Moreover, the very small number of new PCN workers you suggest acquiring (eg clinical pharmacists, social prescribers etc,) are obviously not immediately available but the additional work is expected to happen during their possibly-some-months-long recruitment time - and again the additional work falls on hard-pressed and stressed staff.

We therefore demand that these ill-thought-through specifications are either withdrawn or put on hold forthwith while (a) all objections are fully taken into account, (b) the full cost is guaranteed and made available up-front, and (c) all necessary additional staff are in place.

We look forward to hearing from you, and thank you for your favourable consideration of these matters.

Yours truly

Shirley Murgraff

*pp Keep Our NHS Public Hackney
(KONPH)*

Attached is the letter from HAPIA to Sir Simon Stevens objecting to the consultation timeframe etc.

ACTION

The Commission is requested to give consideration to the discussion.