Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group Communications and Engagement Strategy Briefing

Context and Background
In July 2010 the Government published a White Paper, Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS, setting out its long term vision for the NHS.

In order to shift decision-making as close as possible to patients, power and responsibility for commissioning services – the planning, designing and paying for your NHS services - will become the job of local groups of clinicians.

By April 2013, there should be a comprehensive system of Clinical Commissioning Groups, supported by and accountable to a new independent NHS Commissioning Board. These groups will take over the responsibility for commissioning health services from Primary Care Trusts when they can demonstrate that they are ready to do so.

The Government’s original idea was to have groups of GPs taking on responsibility of commissioning health services. However, following a legislative pause, during May and June 2011, responsibility has been extended so that a wider range of health professionals (which may include nurses and hospitals doctors) will share this responsibility.

What is Clinical Commissioning?
Your local GP practices will join other health professionals in a Clinical Commissioning Group, which will be responsible for commissioning health services. This will include planned and emergency hospital care, rehabilitation, most community services and mental health and learning disability services. GPs and other clinicians will also be responsible for engaging with local people to ensure that the services they are paying for meet your needs.

At the same time local HealthWatch bodies will replace the current Local Involvement Networks (LINks). They will promote public engagement in the NHS, comment on changes to local services, act as advocates for complaints, and deliver advice across health and social care.

What is happening in Oxfordshire?
In December 2010 GPs in Oxfordshire, along with other colleagues from their GP practices, agreed to come together to form one countywide clinician-led consortium, with strong localities, to commission local health services, in order to implement government plans as outlined in the White paper. Following a legislative pause in April 2011 this is now known as the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG).

OCCG has been working very closely with NHS Oxfordshire to develop structures and implement plans. The OCCG will develop as a shadow organisation over the coming months with the aims of being a full shadow organisation in 2012/13.

Oxfordshire is also leading the way in implementing plans for clinical commissioning. The OCCG is part of the national pathfinder programme, as the biggest clinical commissioning group in the country, to test ideas for clinical commissioning and explore how clinical commissioning groups will best be able to undertake their future functions.
Structure
OCCG is headed by an elected clinical lead, Dr Stephen Richards. It has 6 area localities and each locality has an elected lead who sits on the shadow OCCG Board.

- Oxford City
- South East
- South West
- North
- North East
- West

The OCCG Board is a subcommittee of the Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire NHS Cluster Board and will be responsible for developing a work programme through the transition period.

Communications and Engagement
It is important that change is managed carefully to make sure that the healthcare system has continuity and stability. Informing and engaging the public is a key part of this change and is important for the development of OCCG. It is vital that the OCCG develops its stakeholder relations, including engagement with GPs and local people, and the way it seeks and uses feedback to support decision making in developing health services for Oxfordshire.

A Communications and Engagement Strategy has been developed to provide a framework throughout the transition period until the OCCG becomes a statutory body. The aims are:

- To ensure that communications and engagement activities support the principles of the White Paper “Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS” and the subsequent Health and Social Care Bill (January 2011).
- To ensure the views of GPs, acute clinicians, healthcare professionals, patients, carers and the public are taken into consideration in the development, commissioning and provision of services.

The objectives are:

- Build continuous and meaningful engagement with the public, patients and carers to influence the shaping of services and improve the health of people in Oxfordshire.
- Increase confidence in OCCG as a responsive commissioning organisation.
- Develop a culture within OCCG that promotes open communication and engagement within and outside the clinical commissioning group.

To help us develop the OCCG Communications and Engagement Strategy we are consulting with the public. We want to seek feedback and views on proposals set out in the strategy. Please tell us what you think. Will the strategy meet the needs of the local people of Oxfordshire? Are there any areas that the strategy has not identified?

How to get involved
You will be asked to register before you can get all the information.
Read the strategy document and complete our questionnaire.

We are also planning to hold workshops in each of the localities in order to discuss the Strategy in more detail. If you would like to know more information about the meetings we are planning, or for further information about the consultation please contact Cariad Hazard on cariad.hazard@oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk or 01865 334658.