

‘Poking is easy - fixing is our bread and butter is much harder’

Hillary Jenkins

Poking is easy – that’s what I said to Roy, in reply to the comment on his blog about a letter from NHS Wiltshire CCG to its member practices. At times of crisis, you do not alienate the very people on whom you rely for possible solutions; so thanks to Roy for offering me the opportunity to lay out the context in Wiltshire. I speak as a Practice Manager in Wiltshire.

Roy’s comments suggested that the CCG should be more concerned with looking after patients.

To assume that they are not, is harsh. Indeed it because of the investment in services that the CCG position is as it is.

Groups of practices all over Wiltshire have developed new services for patients which aim to deliver good care, out of hospital wherever clinically possible, based on their local population needs.

The CCG is not a Vanguard, neither did we receive any Prime Minister Challenge Fund monies so our projects are funded through existing resources.

Practices now work alongside new care coordinators and well-developed integrated community teams.

Some have innovative Elder Care Facilitators to proactively identify over 75s before their situations deteriorate.

We have step-up and down beds, to keep patients out longer or get them out of hospitals more quickly.

A Leg Club, that started as a centre for treating leg ulcers, has grown into a day centre with a café, social input and voluntary organisations all contributing.

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These schemes will take time to demonstrate savings.

Essentially, locally enhanced services revolving around local services for

local patients.

However, recruiting staff into these new services, developing new pathways and services all takes time.

What we lack and would ask for in return (*and I'm sure this will be echoed nationally*) is a certainty of funding, and support for collaboration so that we can maintain momentum.

So, is it perhaps the laying on the line of the position that is so newsworthy and worth publicising?

After all, Roy's blog of 20 October expounds the following:

"The truth won't go away by wrapping our minds around issues and making them fit our version of reality."

We must unwrap them, meet them head on and deal with the ugliness of the actuality."

In the letter, the CCG tells its members the '*ugliness of the actuality*', outlining how Primary Care can help to turn around the situation.

If the CCG had glossed over the position, or worse, laid it out and given no suggestions for improvement, then I would have been one of the first to criticise.

Wiltshire Practice Managers had asked to understand the full picture and to know how

Practices could help. This letter provided exactly that.

Why is remaining an 'autonomous organisation' so important?

A failure to achieve a £5m 'surplus' puts the CCG at risk of outside intervention. Now call me a cynic, but I'm not aware that looking after patients will feature heavily in this.

Saving money quickly is not patient/person-friendly. Ask those embroiled with cutting the benefits bill.

The CCG must hold its nerve and be allowed to continue with its transformation plan. We have to ensure the sustainability of the three acute hospitals through better efficiency and reducing the number of patients entering the system.

We are one CCG, and we in Primary Care will do everything possible to deliver for patients.

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