

**GP Out Of Hours Pilot June 2006**  
**Briefing paper**

B&NES PCT and the GP Out of Hours service, which is provided by Bath Emergency Medical Services (BEMS) in B&NES, is piloting a change in service provision. This is a three month pilot and is in response to the very low levels of demand for a “face to face” contact with a GP during the period between midnight and 8am. The PCT currently funds the provision of two GPs for the entirety of the OOHs period. These GPs are based at Paulton Hospital and at Riverside Health Centre in Bath. For the period of the pilot, there will still be two GPs available in B&NES, but one of them will be “on call” (ie available to be called from home if needed) whilst the other will be based at the Riverside Health Centre, but will be able to visit patients anywhere in the B&NES patch if required. The Minor Injuries Unit at Paulton Hospital will continue to be open with nurse cover for the full out of hours period.

B&NES PCT and BEMS are proud that the local OOHs service has continued to provide an excellent service over the past few years during a period of considerable change in this service nationally. There is no intention to reduce the level or quality of care that patients experience through this pilot. The large amount of publicity around the pilot will inevitably have created anxiety for people who may need to use this service and therefore both organisations are committed to doing everything they can to reassure local people that they will continue to receive a high quality of care. A regular report will be provided to all interested parties throughout the period of the pilot – this currently includes: the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, local Councillors who have expressed an interest, PCT Board, local individuals who have expressed an interest, the Paulton Hospital User Group, the Paulton Hospital League of Friends and the B&NES Patient and Public Involvement Forum. If you have received this briefing and would like to receive the regular report (sample attached), please contact B&NES PCT on: 01225 831811.

The number of people requiring a “face to face” contact with a GP has been monitored for some time and the figures for the last two winters are given below. These are the months when demand for this service is the highest and therefore have been used to assess whether the pilot should go ahead. The figures are for the whole B&NES.

Month	Average number of patients who received a phone call from a GP (no face to face contact)	Average number of patients seen by a GP (face to face contact at home or at the Primary Care Centre)
Dec 05	5.4	2.6
Jan 06	5.6	2.2
Feb 06	5.6	2.4
Mar 06	5.5	2.2
Apr 06	5.2	2.4
Dec 06	5.1	3.5
Jan 07	5.2	2.9
Feb 07	5.4	2.8
Mar 07	5.1	2.5
Apr 07	4.6	3.3
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>2.7</b>

The elements of the service that remain the same between midnight and 8am are:

- All users of the Out of Hours service will speak to an appropriately qualified nurse who will assess with the person the nature of their medical need. This is based on best practice guidance issued by the Department of Health.
- The nurse led Minor Injury Unit at Paulton Hospital will remain open.
- All other emergency services – such as the A&E Department and the Ambulance service (999 service) will continue to be available.
- A GP will be available to take calls from patients. The GP has a driver so that they can speak to a patient whilst travelling.
- If the GP and the patient need to meet “face to face” they will discuss and agree where this will be. If a patient is unable to travel to a Primary Care Centre, the GP will visit them in their home.
- The doctors who work in the OOH service are all local B&NES GPs. The OOH service provides them with a car and driver who are very familiar with the B&NES patch.
- The Doctors working out of hours also are able to call the District Nursing service or the Ambulance service if it is more appropriate for these staff to visit a patient in their own home.

During the period of the pilot, if a patient has transport problems (between midnight and 8am) but is otherwise fit to travel, the OOH service will pick the patient up from their home and take them to Bath and back. The second GP on call will be called in if the number of patients who need to be seen at any one time becomes too many for one GP.

### **Background to the pilot**

The Department of Health commissioned the National Audit Office to carry out a review of the amount of money that is spent on the OOH service. This review showed B&NES PCT spends more than other PCTs on the medical cover element of the service. The PCT is responsible for ensuring that we commission services that are most effective and high quality that also represent the best value for money for tax payers. The GPs who provide Bath Emergency Medical Services have spent a considerable amount of time reviewing how they can safely improve the value for money of the service that they provide and believe that the model that is being piloted is the most effective way to do this.

The £116,000 saving that could be made in a full year from permanent implementation of this pilot would be invested back into health services for the local community.

This is a three month pilot during which time the GPs who run BEMS and the PCT are encouraging feedback from people who use the service. The pilot will be discussed with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their July meeting and the PCT and BEMS will be asking them to advise on whether formal consultation is required, should the trial prove to be successful and the PCT wish to implement it permanently.

### **Feedback from patients on the Out of Hours Service**

The Out of Hours service undertakes patient surveys on an ongoing basis. The results from the survey between February and April 07 were as follows:

- 75% of users thought that service was excellent/good
- 87% agreed they were treated with dignity and respect.

### **Comments from patients**

'My daughter had never had a stomach bug before (she is 17 months) and the reassurance the call gave me was great. It also prevented me wasting a GP's time on Monday morning.'

'Paulton is a very local hospital to me with this out of hours service. I get a bad throat very often and need a prescription when my throat starts to close over. I am very grateful to be able to get medicine.'

'I have used the out of hours services on several occasions and even at Christmas. All staff I come into contact with i.e. Paulton Hospital are a credit to you. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to let you know how grateful I am.'

'Very good and helpful enabling us to be calm.'

'As a result of eye infection and unable to see my GP I called at your service. On arrival at the centre I was attended by a sister/nurse and medication advised for eye infection. If the medication, eye drops, had not worked to return the following day for re-examination, which I did and was referred to doctor for treatment, namely antibiotics. Service was excellent – and the treatment diagnosed and sound – no necessity to attend own GP. Many thanks.'

'First time I'd used the service – thought it was very good, prompt and efficient. If anything, the 'weakest link' was the GP herself who was a bit abrupt and unfriendly, but overall I was just pleased and grateful to be able to see a doctor quickly. Thanks.'

### **Financial information:**

Full year cost of the midnight to 8.00am shift pre pilot = £416,000

Full year cost of the midnight to 8.00am shift with pilot model: £300,000

Saving in a full year: £116,000.

Note: a shift is an eight hour period (ie Midnight to 8.00am)

## REGULAR REPORT FOR OUT OF HOURS PILOT (sample)

Week one – 1<sup>st</sup> June to 8<sup>th</sup> June

### Activity

All data is for the full 8 hour period

Date	Visits to patient's place of residence		Patient attendances at Riverside Health Centre		Phone advice given by GP	
	Bath	Paulton	Bath	Paulton	Bath	Paulton
1 June 07	0	1	1	0	4	0
2 June 07	1	1	0	3	6	0
3 June 07	1	1	0	0	2	3
4 June 07	0	0	0	0	5	0
5 June 07	0	3	1	0	0	0
6 June 07	2	0	0	3	0	0
7 June 07	4	0	0	0	5	3
<b>Average</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.9</b>

### Comments received from patients:

We will share comments received from users of the service.

### Feedback from patient survey:

Two patient satisfaction surveys will be carried out during the course of the pilot.

One will be a sample of all users of the OOH service.

One will be targeted at users of the service between midnight and 8am.

### Comments from GPs:

We will share any comments received from the local GP community.