

Report of Secretary for Scotland to Guild Council Meeting 23/11/11

Group Meetings

Since my last report to Council, there has been one meeting of Glasgow and West of Scotland Group. I presented a combination of the local Unite presentation and Dave Thornton's presentation on the proposed changes in pensions and the industrial action ballot. The meeting was also attended by the Unite Regional Officer, Gordon Casey, the Employee Director of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Donald Sime, and the Unite representative on the STAC Pensions Subgroup, James Ito. The members attending found the evening very informative and the main points along with the presentation were sent out on the ghpscot mailing list to members throughout Scotland.

In the Press

21/09/2011 The Scottish Spending Review 2011 confirmed that the Scottish Government will:

- Pass on in full to the NHS in Scotland the Barnett consequentials from increases in UK health spending;
- Freeze basic pay for 2012-13, to protect employment and continue the policy of no compulsory redundancies for those areas under direct Ministerial control, while paying the uprated Scottish Living Wage of £7.20 an hour and ensuring that any employee earning less than £21,000 continues to receive at least a £250 rise.
- Increase, reluctantly, employee pension contributions for NHS, teachers, police and fire schemes in Scotland, with in-built protection for the low paid

Finance Secretary John Swinney said: "Between 2010-11 and 2014-15, Scotland faces a real terms cut of 12.3 per cent - £3.7 billion - including a real terms cut of 36.7 per cent to our capital budget.

"We will lead an ambitious programme of public service reform that challenges the public sector in Scotland to reshape, integrate and deliver better services, consistent with the recommendations of the Christie Commission. And in response to the McClelland Report on ICT Infrastructure, I expect every public sector organisation to demonstrate how they will contribute to the potential savings identified of up to one billion pounds in the next five years.

They will also prioritise key projects such as the New Glasgow Southern Hospitals Project.

14/09/2011 An accurate and up-to-date electronic medication summary will be made available to pharmacists across all care settings by 2014, the Scottish Government has announced, in a bid to improve medicines safety.

In its eHealth strategy for 2011-2017, published on 12 September 2011, the Scottish Government outlined its vision of improved medicines reconciliation across all care settings. It specifies electronic patient medication summaries, which will be available to "appropriate healthcare workers" throughout scheduled and unscheduled care settings. A Scottish Government spokeswoman confirmed pharmacists will be included in this group. Working with stakeholders,

the Government will explore how records will be made available to healthcare professionals, possibly through the use of portals and web-based technologies.

In addition, a working group has been established to decide whether to roll out a hospital electronic prescribing and medicines administration system across Scotland, taking into account financial pressures affecting the NHS. The group will report on its findings at the end of this year and its recommendations will be implemented, the eHealth strategy document states.

The work is part of a larger drive to achieve five strategic eHealth aims set out by Scotland's deputy first minister Nicola Sturgeon. Over the next six years, the Scottish Government will focus on improving medicines safety, contributing to care integration, enhancing the availability of information for staff, maximising efficient working practices and supporting people to communicate with NHS Scotland.

27/09/2011 NHS 24 has launched a new digital TV channel to improve patients' access to health information and advice from the comfort of their own home. The channel, available through Freesat, Sky and Virgin, gives people access to health advice and information on local services. An app for iphones, ipads and android smartphones also gives access to the digital service. The channel offers information from NHS 24, NHS inform and Care Information Scotland web services, improving access to health information for those who don't have home internet access - often those from more deprived communities or older people who could potentially benefit most from this advice. NHS 24 is also using this system to pilot a scheme with Dunblane Medical Practice where patients can book appointments with their GP and which in future may enable them to order repeat prescriptions.

04/10/2011 The Scottish Government is committed to a new financing model that has replaced the discredited Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and have said the Non Profit Distributing (NPD) model will play a pivotal role in improving Scotland's infrastructure and supporting the Scottish economy. It removes the excessive profits made by private companies in past PFI projects, gives stakeholders greater involvement in the management of projects and ensures any surplus money from the project can be reinvested for public benefit.

04/10/2011 First Minister Alex Salmond wrote to NHS staff to set out the way in which the Scottish Government are handling the first phase of the UK Government's pension reform agenda and to explain the reasons behind it. He stated, "We are strongly opposed in principle to the UK Government's policy of increasing contributions. At a time of pay freezes, significant increases in national insurance contributions, higher VAT, rising inflation and fuel costs, we believe it is wrong to require public servants to have to increase their pension contributions. The UK Government has made it crystal clear that if we do not implement the increase in pension contributions then they will reduce the amount of money in the Scottish Budget. This applies to everyone in the Scottish NHS, Teachers, Police and Fire pension schemes. The impact of that would be to reduce the Scottish Budget by over £100m in 2012-13 and by more than £550 million over the next three years. This would have an immediate, significant and detrimental impact on public services and the size of the public sector workforce." Therefore, "we have no option other than to commence a consultation exercise to determine how the increases in contributions are implemented across these four pension schemes."

My response on behalf of GHP to the consultation is available on the website.

05/10/2011 It was reported that cases of MRSA and MSSA are at their lowest level since records began in 2005. Published figures showed cases of MRSA have reduced by over 75.8% compared with the same period in 2007.

09/10/2011 Hospitals in Ayrshire are under fire for a controversial new policy that drafts in volunteers from the local community to help nurses on busy wards by feeding frail patients during meal times. NHS officials say the scheme aims to tackle the problem of malnutrition in hospitals and provide extra social contact for patients who may not have any other visitors. It could be extended to other hospitals in Scotland if the pilot is successful. However, nursing unions said volunteers should not be used to provide patient care "on the cheap" while nursing posts were being cut. The initiative is being trialled as part of a programme to improve nutritional care, which is being run by Healthcare Improvement Scotland, a national body set up to scrutinise and improve NHS care.

11/10/2011 Researchers in Glasgow have devised a lung cancer "inhaler" that could cut drug costs for the NHS and reduce side effects for patients. The device uses a standard hospital nebuliser adapted to deliver a high concentration of the lung cancer drug, cisplatin, in the form of a vapour, which patients can breathe directly into their diseased lung tissue. Its creators believe administering the drug in this way - as a "breathable medicine" instead of the normal intravenous method - means healthy tissue will be left unharmed, and treatment will be quicker and more effective in prolonging and improving a patient's quality of life. There could also be considerable cost savings for the NHS, with doctors able to achieve the same results with a lower dose because less cisplatin is being wasted. The cisplatin is delivered into the body in protective "lipid bubbles" - a fatty coating which prevents the drug leaking out before it reaches its destination. Patients using the nebuliser would be sealed off in tent-style contraptions to prevent gases leaking out and being inhaled by other patients or medical staff.

10/10/2011 Semichem in Kirkcaldy is the first store to be equipped with a public access defibrillator in a partnership between the Scottish Ambulance Service and Scotmid. Staff at the shop are the first in the country to have been trained to use the automated defibrillators in a programme that will see them rolled out to 40 Scotmid, Semichem and Fragrance House shops across Scotland. The initiative is part of a programme to provide Community Public Access Defibrillators in areas where they can help save lives. Working closely with British Heart Foundation (BHF) Scotland, the Scottish Ambulance Service is helping Scotmid to purchase and install the in store defibrillators, training staff to ensure that they can be quickly deployed whenever needed. The SAS has worked closely with the company to map its store locations in order to identify where the defibrillators are likely to save most lives.

19/10/2011 The role which pharmacists play in contributing to the healthcare of patients in the community is to be reviewed as a further step towards enhancing their involvement in primary healthcare. The review will aim to enhance the role of pharmacists and encourage closer working with GPs and other community based services. It will examine the arrangements for providing NHS pharmaceutical services, their fitness for purpose - including novel concepts such as the evaluation of group pharmacy practice and specialisation - and their long term sustainability.

Cabinet Secretary for Health, Nicola Sturgeon said: "Pharmacists play an increasingly important role in the direct care of patients. As pharmaceutical drugs grow in complexity it is essential that our pharmacists, who are experts in medicines, work in partnership with GPs and

others to ensure that patients receive the best results from their treatment and that adverse effects are minimised."

"Pharmacists' work goes far beyond that of the supply of medicines and includes direct patient care such as medication reviews for those at risk of falls and prescribing clinics for patients with chronic pain. However, we believe that there is further scope to develop and enhance their role for the future, as well as the arrangements that underpin the planning, contracting and delivery of pharmacists' services to ensure their longer term sustainability and achieve the high quality healthcare to which we are committed."

"The review will provide the basis of that, enabling us to agree the future shape of the pharmaceutical care of patients in the community, improve joint working between GPs and pharmacists to enhance services to patients with chronic conditions and ensure that we make the best possible use of pharmacists' skills and expertise."

21/10/2011 In her speech to the Scottish National Party conference, Nicola Sturgeon mentioned health and the NHS a number of times, stating

- "The minimum pricing on alcohol bill will be reintroduced to parliament within the next month. "
- "It now seems inevitable that the Tories, aided and abetted by their Liberal partners, will break up the NHS in England. The NHS in Scotland will remain a public service, paid for by the public and accountable to the public. There will be no privatisation of the National Health Service in Scotland."
- "What is less well known is that we are now the only part of the UK where hospital waiting times continue to fall. "
- "Over the next four years, an extra £ 1 billion will be invested in our health service. "
- "By 2013, 25% of all type 1 diabetes sufferers under the age of 18 will have access to insulin pumps. "
- "Free personal care for the elderly is safe in our hands."
- "We have made big progress in reducing delayed discharges in hospitals. The current target is that no-one should be in hospital more than 6 weeks after being deemed fit for discharge."
- "We will cut the maximum time that it is acceptable for any older person to be delayed in hospital. The target will initially reduce from six weeks to four weeks.
- "By the start of 2015, under this SNP government, no older person will be unnecessarily delayed in hospital for any longer than two weeks. "
- "The economic climate - and our commitment to no compulsory redundancies - means that a pay freeze for all but the lowest paid has been unavoidable. But what is avoidable is the increase in pension contributions planned by the UK government. "
- "It would make more sense for pensions policy to be decided here in Scotland. And that is what will happen when Scotland is independent. "

25/10/2011 A new £3 million scheme - the NRS Career Researcher Fellowship - will support the next generation of researchers in NHSScotland. Running for three years from 2012, the scheme will allow clinical staff within the NHS to develop a research career by funding protected time for research activities. In the first year around 25 awards will be made across Scotland at a total cost of £1 million. The scheme is intended to support those at early consultant level or equivalent and

with limited research experience to date. Successful applicants will be expected to contribute to ongoing clinical research and conduct and lead their own projects, either funded by a non-commercial or industry partner. The scheme will allow NHSScotland to build on excellence in areas where research already flourishes or to develop research in so-called 'orphan' areas of importance to the people of Scotland. In doing so it will contribute to increasing the number of patients involved in clinical research and bring economic benefit to Scotland in the form of research funding.

31/10/2011 A £36m research institute dedicated to developing new medicines has been opened by Strathclyde University. The facility, in Glasgow, brings together researchers in chemistry, biology and pharmacy. They will work on new treatments for some of the UK's biggest killers such as cancer, heart disease and stroke. The centre, which has a "clean suite" for handling and packaging drugs, will also work to develop new treatments for global diseases such as malaria and TB. The university invested £28m in building the centre, with support from the Scottish Funding Council and the European Regional Development Fund. The remaining £8m came from fundraising, with surgeon and television presenter Professor Lord Winston as patron.

9/11/11 The Scottish Parliament debated a motion "that the Parliament notes with concern the amount of prescription medicine wastage in Scotland; commends the *NHS Forth Valley* eWard scheme, which allows hospitals and community pharmacies to share information electronically, thereby helping to improve patient safety and reduce medicine waste; notes the report published in 2010 by the University of York that shows that better medicines management around the time of hospital admission and discharge will result in more optimal use of medicines; believes that the role of pharmacists in helping people understand their medicines will be enhanced by the Chronic Medication Service; recognises that, in order to minimise medicine waste, the electronic recording and sharing of information between hospitals, GPs and pharmacies is essential, and considers that this issue is worthy of further debate. " It was agreed that only through a more co-ordinated approach, better education on the use of drugs, and the recycling of unused medicines will major inroads be made into drug wastage in the NHS.

10/11/11 Nicola Sturgeon has told members of the Scottish Parliament Health Committee that health boards could face further efficiency savings next year. She commented: "The overarching responsibility on health boards, beyond meeting any particular yearly targets, is to be as efficient in the delivery of healthcare services as they can be, and that is an ongoing requirement." The Cabinet Secretary called on health boards to be "each other's best friend, not the enemy of each other" and stressed that the notion that better quality care was more expensive wasn't always accurate.

Unlicensed Medicines Review

Work continues on the business case for a single site for the manufacture of unlicensed medicines in Scotland. Work has also started on the criteria for selection of a suitable site.

National Services Scotland Pharmacy Redesign

I was contacted by one of the pharmacists involved in this redesign. The proposals would reduce the number of pharmacists at a higher level in the organisation from 4 to 3. The pharmacist involved was advised to contact the senior Unite representative within NSS.

Prescribing Review

At a recent Unite representatives meeting, I was informed that the Unite Scottish NHS committee had been approached for a nomination for the Prescribing workstream, which is part of the wider Scottish Government Efficiency and Productivity portfolio. My name had been put forward as the most appropriate person to represent Unite. I was contacted yesterday by the group and have volunteered to be part of the Secondary and Primary Care Interface Subgroup.

Other

I have dealt with a number of member queries, several new membership and new PII applications.

Colin Rodden
22.11.11