

**Meeting of  
Lanarkshire NHS Board  
26 September 2007**

Lanarkshire NHS Board  
14 Beckford Street  
Hamilton ML3 0TA



## **IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE OF THOSE WHO CONTACT NHS LANARKSHIRE**

### **Purpose**

This paper and attachment is presented to the NHS Board to provide an update on the development of an action plan to respond to the Scottish Consumer Council (SCC) report and survey on the experience of members of the public in contacting their local NHS. The Board is asked to endorse the action plan.

### **Background and Action Taken**

The SCC undertook a survey using “mystery shopper” techniques using numbers contained within telephone directories and on the NHS websites. NHS Lanarkshire was identified as one of the poor performers, relative to the rest of Scotland. The SCC mystery shopping exercise was largely confined to Board Headquarters and in Lanarkshire’s case this means Beckford Street.

As agreed at the Board Meeting in May a review group was established to develop an action plan. The draft action plan is attached. Some immediate improvements in the action plan have already been completed and other actions will require longer and more detailed planning and implementation.

In the SCC report there is recognition that responders were in the main courteous but that there were no standards in place to ensure a consistent approach to dealing with enquiries either via the telephone, email or web.

The review group has sought to redress these issues by proposing the development of standards, policies and systems which are focussed initially on front line responders, eg switchboard operators, main reception and secretarial staff. It is intended that the standards would be rolled out across NHSL to all staff who deal with telephone, email and web enquiries. As with all policies and procedures this will require Area Partnership Forum endorsement.

In order to test the policy and standards it is recommended that a pilot takes place at Beckford Street and Strathclyde Hospital, which would include reception, switchboard and secretarial staff. Following evaluation wider implementation across NHS Lanarkshire would be taken forward.

## **Summary of Key Proposals**

The main improvements proposed in the action plan are:

- Development of Policy and Customer Care Standards with associated training during implementation.
- Improved “contact us” section and investment to develop the website further.
- Responsibility for updating the telephone directory transferred to the Communications department. Online telephone directories have been updated and display advertising is proposed to improve the telephone books.
- External calls to Beckford Street and Strathclyde to be routed through Monklands Switchboard.
- Establishment of a general enquiry line using existing Linkline Resources
- New internal telephone directory using NHSL Intranet Firstport.

## **Actions**

- NHS Boards were asked to submit progress with responding to the SCC report to the Scottish Government during August and NHSL’s draft action plan was submitted.
- The Scottish Consumer Council is hosting a “Call for Improvement” conference on 5 October at which delegates will explore good customer care practice and will share examples of good practice. The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing is the keynote speaker and NHS Lanarkshire will be represented at this event.
- The review group continues to meet to further refine and implement the draft action plan. The action plan will be reviewed further following the Conference in October.

The Board is asked to endorse the action plan and note the progress that has taken place.

Karon Hamilton  
Head of Communications

18 September 2007