

Building the foundations for a solid future

Northamptonshire Teaching PCT is paving the way for world-class health services with a range of building projects which will provide 21st Century facilities fit for the growing population of Northamptonshire.

The PCT is building the foundations for a solid future with projects across the county including Corby, Northampton, Brackley and Wellingborough, as follows:

- Multi-million pound primary care centres in Corby and Northampton
- Plans to develop Brackley Cottage Hospital
- Plans for a new health centre at Isebrook Hospital, Wellingborough, to replace the Gold Street Medical Centre.
- New health centre opened in Lower Street, Kettering on 10 March for the 26,000 patients with Eskdaill and Weavers Medical Centres
- Plans to commission four GP practices to open 8am to 8pm, seven days a week in Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Northampton.

The Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) developments in Corby and Upton (Northampton) moved another step forward after the PCT's LIFT Board decided to separate the two projects to advance the procurement process and ensure we get the best facilities for our patients at the earliest opportunity.

Previously the plan was to present the business cases for both schemes to the PCT Board in one.

Gill Scoular, Director of Finance and Performance of Northamptonshire Teaching PCT, said: "The population in Northamptonshire is growing and we want to ensure we have the best facilities available for both our patients and those moving to the area.

"Both areas we are targeting through LIFT have different health needs and, as such, we have decided that it is appropriate to separate the projects."

In Brackley, negotiations are taking place between the PCT, GPs and members of the Brackley Cottage Hospital Trust to develop a business case to improve healthcare facilities within the town.

Dr Charles Perrott, lead GP at the Health Centre in Brackley, said: "The Brackley GPs are now working on firm new proposals with Northamptonshire Teaching PCT and Trustees of the Cottage Hospital for the development of a new Primary Care Centre for the people of Brackley. A special meeting of the general practices took place on Thursday 21 February and a way forward was agreed."

In Kettering, the new Lower Street Medical Centre (Prospect House) opens on Monday 10 March for the 26,000 patients registered with Eskdaill and Weavers Medical Centres. Both practices will retain their existing GPs, staff and patients, but the new building offers much enhanced facilities including 35 consulting rooms, training rooms, clinics for both individual and group sessions, and minor operations suites.

Maureen Heath, Practice Manager at Weavers said: "We are very excited about this new facility for our patients and it means they will not have to wait as long for minor operations. We will also be able to provide a lot more services from here with purpose built consulting suites and capacity for both individual and group clinics. The building is fit for purpose and will also allow for the expected population growth – we really think both our existing patients and new ones will benefit greatly from this exciting new development."

In Wellingborough, Gold Street Medical Centre will be submitting a planning application soon to Wellingborough Council for a new practice at Isebrook Hospital in Irthlingborough Road.

Dr Johnny McMahon said: "The Gold Street Practices are currently in negotiation with Northamptonshire Primary Care Trust with a view to relocating to a state of the art purpose built primary care facility at the Isebrook Hospital. By collaborating with the other practices in the town of Wellingborough, we believe this is an excellent opportunity to improve services to all our patients."

In addition, the PCT plans to commission four new GP practices in the next two years, which will open seven days a week from 8am to 8pm. The practices will include registration and walk-in and minor injuries facilities and the plan is to have practices in Corby and Kettering up and running by December 2008, and practices in Wellingborough and Northampton some time during 2009/10.

Richard Alsop, Director of Strategic Development and Commissioning for the PCT, said: "This is an exciting time for primary care in Northamptonshire and we are starting to deliver real improvements that put patients at the centre of services, making sure they can access their GP when it is convenient for them.

The 8-8 centres will make a real difference to patient's lives and form part of a range of measures aimed at improving access for patients in Northamptonshire.

"All the new facilities and services planned will help us in our plans to move towards World Class Commissioning and ensuring Northamptonshire Teaching PCT becomes one of the best PCTs in the country."

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