Dear Professor Smith

We welcome the opportunity given to comment on Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust’s draft declarations. OSCs are the only democratically elected bodies to comment on the Trust’s developments.

We have received the Trust's draft declarations, but we are not in a position to verify all the responses; however, where we have evidence to verify comments, we do so.

Our comments are based on the evidence we have collected over the previous year based on:

1. A survey of Kensington and Chelsea Residents’ Panel on local health services. The panel comprises of 1063 residents and there were 511 completed returns to this survey. 40% of the respondents said that they had visited their local hospital in the past year. Of the 213 respondents who had visited a hospital in the past year, 39 had visited St Marys and 5 people had visited Hammersmith. For the purposes of this analysis the responses relating to Hammersmith Hospital have been excluded.
2. A review of Health Inequalities in the borough carried out by the Health OSC between November 2006 and December 2007*. 
3. A review of the PCT’s Commissioning Priorities (to be published).

* http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/Content/HTTPSQLA_HNHDS/d7efb128/f25d7476f0d14b81002573df004b78d8/822a31f40c074402002573df004b78e1/23654.pdf
Core Standard C6: Healthcare organisations cooperate with each other and social care organisations to ensure that patients’ individual needs are properly managed and met

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea’s OSC and Council have both had a good working relationship with St Mary’s Hospital.

The Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust has not been totally clear, as they might not know the answers themselves, about the detail of its plans for local services. So we remain unclear as to the impact. We still wish to know: What shifts are going to happen in local NHS capacity due to the AHSC development? How will the Trust ensure that this does not have a destabilising impact on other NHS providers? There should be clear statements as to how matters are affected in the medium term (i.e. anticipated improvements, risks etc).

We are concerned that we remain unclear as to how the Chelsea and Westminster hospital fit with the long term plans of Imperial College NHS Trust. We hope the Foundation Trust and Imperial College NHS Trust will work towards some type of charter for collaboration.

We are pleased there are plans that the relationship between the Royal Brompton and Harefield and Imperial College NHS Trust are to be formalised in a common charter for collaboration. A good relationship with Imperial is vital to the Royal Brompton and Harefield.

The OSC Survey of the Borough’s Residents Panel on local health services found that only 54% of the respondents who were referred to St Mary’s Hospital said that the person they were referred to had all the information about their condition. This should be a cause for concern to the hospital concerned and the PCT.

Core Standard C13: Healthcare organisations have systems in place to ensure that staff treat patients, their relatives and carers with dignity and respect

The OSC Survey of the Borough’s Residents Panel on local health services found that 87% of those respondents who had visited St Mary’s hospital said that they had been treated with dignity and respect.
Core Standard C15: Where food is provided healthcare organisations have systems in place to ensure that (a) patients are provided with choice and that it is prepared safely and provides a balanced diet, (b) patients individual nutritional, personal and clinical dietary requirements are met, including where necessary help with feeding and access to food 24 hours a day.

The OSC Survey of the Borough’s Residents Panel on local health services found that only 11% of those respondents who had visited St Mary’s hospital said that the quality of food and catering provided by St Mary’s hospital was good.

Core Standard C16: Healthcare organisations make information available to patients and the public on their services, provide patients with suitable and accessible information on the care and treatment they receive and, where appropriate, inform patients on what to expect during treatment, care and aftercare.

The OSC Survey of the Borough’s Residents Panel on local health services found that 79% of those respondents who had visited St Mary’s hospital said that the information they were given by St Mary’s hospital was easy to understand.

Core Standard C17: The views of patients, their carers and others are sought and taken into account in designing, planning, delivering and improving healthcare services.

The OSC Survey of the Borough’s Residents Panel on local health services received the following comments on St Mary’s Hospital:

Both record keeping organising or papers. Test results to consultants choice re-minor ops appoint arranging all v. Poor - v. v. poor.

Overall care was good for such a busy hospital, but overstay in paediatrics was dreadful (staff were great) because of all new arrivals go to out ward, with no possibility of sleep or rest (which my son being ill with severe pain needed- and I as his carer also needed). Should make a separate area for night time admissions, and staff should remind parents to be quiet in the middle of the night.

I was not given a choice of hospital because I have been going to St Mary’s for the same issues since 1994 so there would be no point in being transferred anywhere else.

Follow up from appointments is hopeless - need to chase always to get seen again.
The doctor I see is fantastic and most of the nursing staff have been great; although I have been surprised by some of the inefficient reception staff and difficulty in booking appointments

Although St Mary’s is not in Kensington and Chelsea, it is the only hospital I can get to on public transport. Chelsea and Westminster is poorly situated.

Waiting time for appointments too long

Local Involvement Networks (LINks)
We encourage the Imperial College NHS Trust to have excellent working relationships with the Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham and Westminster LINks after 1st April 2008.

Core Standard C18: Healthcare organisations enable all members of the population to access services equally and offer choice in access to services and treatment equally

The OSC Survey of the Borough’s Residents Panel on local health services found that only 39% of the respondents visiting St Mary’s hospital said that they did get a choice about which hospital they were referred to.

Core Standard C20: Healthcare services are provided in environments which promote effective care and optimise health outcomes by being: (a) a safe and secure environment which protects patients, staff, visitors and their property, and the physical assets of the organisation; (b) supportive of patient privacy and confidentiality

The OSC’s Health Inequalities Review found that some people with learning disabilities were not able to make use of specialist surgery based GP services because of behavioural issues. Parents of children with complex disabilities highlighted the need for care providers to take simple, practical steps such as having a flexible appointments system (allowing for double appointments or early or late appointments), providing individual cubicles in hospitals etc which would make their life easier

Core Standard C21: Healthcare services are provided in environments which promote effective care and optimize health outcomes by being well designed and well maintained, with
cleanliness levels in clinical and non-clinical areas that meet the national specification for clean NHS premises

The OSC Survey of the Borough’s Residents Panel on local health services found that only 34% of those respondents who had visited St Mary’s hospital were satisfied with the standard of cleanliness and hygiene at the hospital.

We consider that many of St Mary’s hospital buildings are dilapidated or in poor condition, so they will need to be rebuilt in the future. Currently, they provide an old and poor environment for patients and staff when they should provide an environment to help patients recover and prevent infections.

Core Standard C22: Healthcare organisations promote, protect and demonstrably improve the health of the community served and narrow health inequalities by (a) cooperating with each other and with local authorities and organisations; (b) making an appropriate and effective contribution to local partnership arrangements including local strategic partnerships and crime and disorder reduction partnerships.

The OSC’s Health Inequalities Review found that there was further scope for better co-ordination between the PCT and the local Acute Trusts to give a clear set of healthy living and disease prevention messages to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in the community.

Core Standard C23: Healthcare organisations have systematic and managed disease prevention and health promotion programmes which meet the requirements of the national service frameworks and national plans with regard to reducing obesity through action on nutrition and exercise, smoking, substance misuse and sexually transmitted infections.

We would encourage Imperial College to be fully involved in the borough-wide health promoting strategies in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham (e.g. public health and community strategies).

Kensington and Chelsea PCT has produced a Sustainability Protocol. We would hope that Imperial College NHS Foundation Trust is going to sign up to this.
Maternity services

We are concerned about the provision of maternity services for our residents. In the Healthcare Commission's comprehensive review of maternity services both St Mary's and Hammersmith Hospitals scored "least well performing".¹

Conclusion

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea’s OSC on Health is pleased to be able to take up this opportunity to participate in the Annual Health Check process 2007/08.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Christopher Buckmaster
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Health
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

¹ The Healthcare Commission’s reports are available on the Internet:
(1)StMary's

(2)Hammersmith
http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/_db/_documents/RQNScoredAssessment.pdf