

# PROPERTY MATTERS

ISSUE: 3



## Letter from Graham Roberts, Chief Executive of Assura Group



Welcome to 2014's first issue of Property Matters as we look ahead to a pivotal year for UK healthcare.

2013 saw significant upheaval for the NHS, with the introduction of CCGs, CQC regulation and changes to healthcare funding. One particularly promising step has been the re-evaluation of the relationship between primary and secondary care, with more focus on the role of GPs in reducing hospital admissions.

This issue will look at how we can continue to adapt to the changing landscape of the UK health sector. By looking at new guidelines and future investment in primary care property, we can ensure that we are equipped for any further developments and prepared for the impact they will have on health services over the next year.

We will also outline Assura Group's plans and projects we can look forward to in the coming months. In the year ahead we will remain dedicated to supporting the delivery of excellent primary care, and assisting GPs across the UK in their commitment to improving treatment and prevention wherever possible.

Graham Roberts

## ASSURA GROUP CELEBRATES QUADRUPLE COMPLETION

The last three months have seen a spate of activity for Assura Group, as we celebrated completions in Harlech, Willington, Redditch and Stockton. These included the Church Hill Medical and Neighbourhood Centre in Redditch, which will provide a range of services to local residents, including pharmacy, retail and community centre offerings, and also the £1.5 million refurbishment of Queens Park Medical Centre in Stockton. We have also secured six new sale and leasebacks, where we will be supporting the GPs in expanding and revitalising their facilities to ensure the highest quality of healthcare delivery.

# FEATURED PROPERTY: HARLECH

Assura Group celebrated the completion of its 200<sup>th</sup> medical centre with the opening of Harlech in North Wales.

The 7,100 sq ft primary care centre saw the relocation of Ardudwy Health Centre from its former site at Ffordd y Traeth. The health centre is now combined with the Local Health Board, which has taken 546 sq ft in the new premises.

The building is one of Assura's most sustainable properties to date. Sustainability measures include the incorporation of an insulated timber frame and biomass boiler that uses wood pellets to fuel the building. The innovations will ensure the building is efficient and cost effective, as will the installation of Photo Voltaic panels to the roof, all of which will reduce the amount of energy required to run the building and give the centre a Zero Carbon status.

Judith Clarke, lead GP for Ardudwy and Bronmeirion Surgery, said: "It has been wonderful seeing the progression of the surgery from its original plans to the finished result. We're very happy to see the project completed, and are thankful for the support that we have received throughout the process from both the local community and those working on the project."



## ASSURA GROUP MILE WALK

With recent discussions in the House of Commons suggesting that GPs should be able to prescribe walking for patients 'to improve their life', there is an increasing focus on primary care practitioners turning more towards 'proactive', in addition to 'reactive', care.

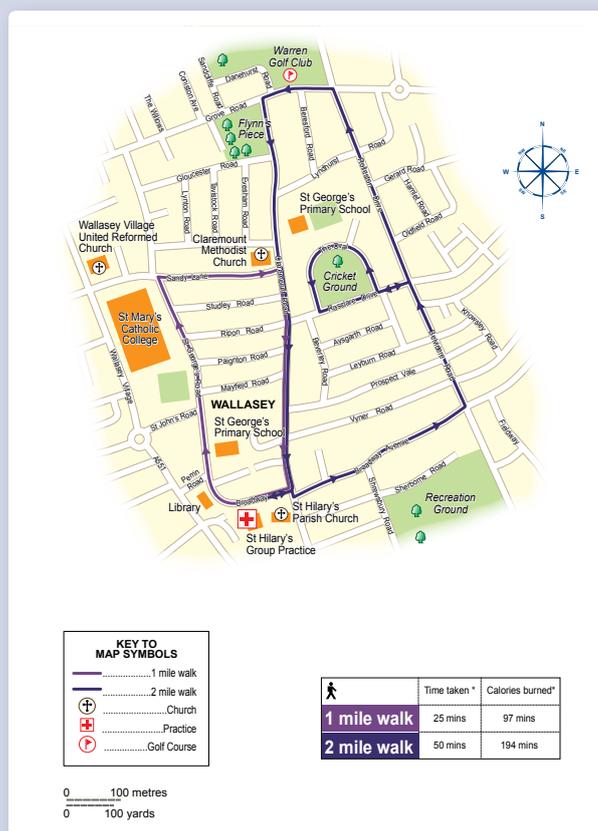
As part of our work supporting GPs with their preventative care and wellbeing offerings, we are providing measured walks around the local area near your surgery to encourage patients to get active.

On the right is an example from St Hilary's Group Practice in Wallasey.

The maps are A1 in size, wall mountable and encapsulated in perspex. If you would like Assura Group to design, provide and install a route please get in touch.

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# WHY WE MUST INVEST FOR SUCCESS IN PRIMARY CARE

Dr James Kingsland and Graham Roberts



While it may be true that there is currently too much variation in opening times across UK practices, it is not enough to simply increase access. We must also enhance the capacity and capability of general practice; and that means significant investment in primary care and its estates.

With overstretched emergency departments being increasingly used by patients for non-emergency care, extended in-hours care is a possible solution. However, increased GP hours cannot address the problem if they are still operating from inadequate premises.

Too many times in the past we have seen policy that is not grounded in strong evidence or that builds on existing best practice. This sometimes then results in a 'reinvention of the wheel', where precious time and resources are wasted in pursuit of unclear outcomes. A strategic approach to the improved access and availability of GP services needs to be developed.

For primary care to deliver solutions for the better management of both urgent and planned out-of-hospital care, a sustained programme of support for the development of this vital part of our NHS is required. It also needs to focus on the triple aims of improved patient outcomes, patient experience and value.

While last year's announcement from David Cameron regarding a £50 million 'challenge fund' to improve access to practical services was a welcome one, it doesn't address the issue of maintaining the level of service required long term.

The £50 million investment might be helpful for pioneering new models of primary care, but pioneers are usually expected to leave a trail for others to follow. The current primary care estate needs to be brought up to scratch in order to enable the completion of more episodes of care, and this can only be done with sustained funding released from current inefficient or unnecessary services.

## Featured Charity



Assura Group is proud to support Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF).

MSF is an independent international medical humanitarian organisation that delivers emergency aid in more than 60 countries to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, natural or man-made disasters or exclusion from healthcare.

It rehabilitates and runs hospitals and clinics, performs surgery, battles epidemics, carries out vaccination campaigns, operates feeding centres for malnourished children and offers mental healthcare.

Through longer term programmes, MSF treats patients with infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, sleeping sickness and HIV/AIDS and provides medical and psychological care to marginalised groups, such as street children.

Founded by doctors and journalists in 1971, MSF is now a worldwide movement with offices in 19 countries and an international coordination office in Geneva, Switzerland.

**For further information, please go to [www.msf.org.uk](http://www.msf.org.uk)**

# FUNDING DEVELOPMENTS IN 2014 - ANDREW DARKE, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY AT ASSURA GROUP



As plans for further integrated care take shape in 2014, we can expect to see larger premises that include a variety of different healthcare providers and a wider range of facilities. This will enable the NHS to complete more episodes of treatment at the primary care level, and is a welcome move towards easing pressure on GPs and hospitals.

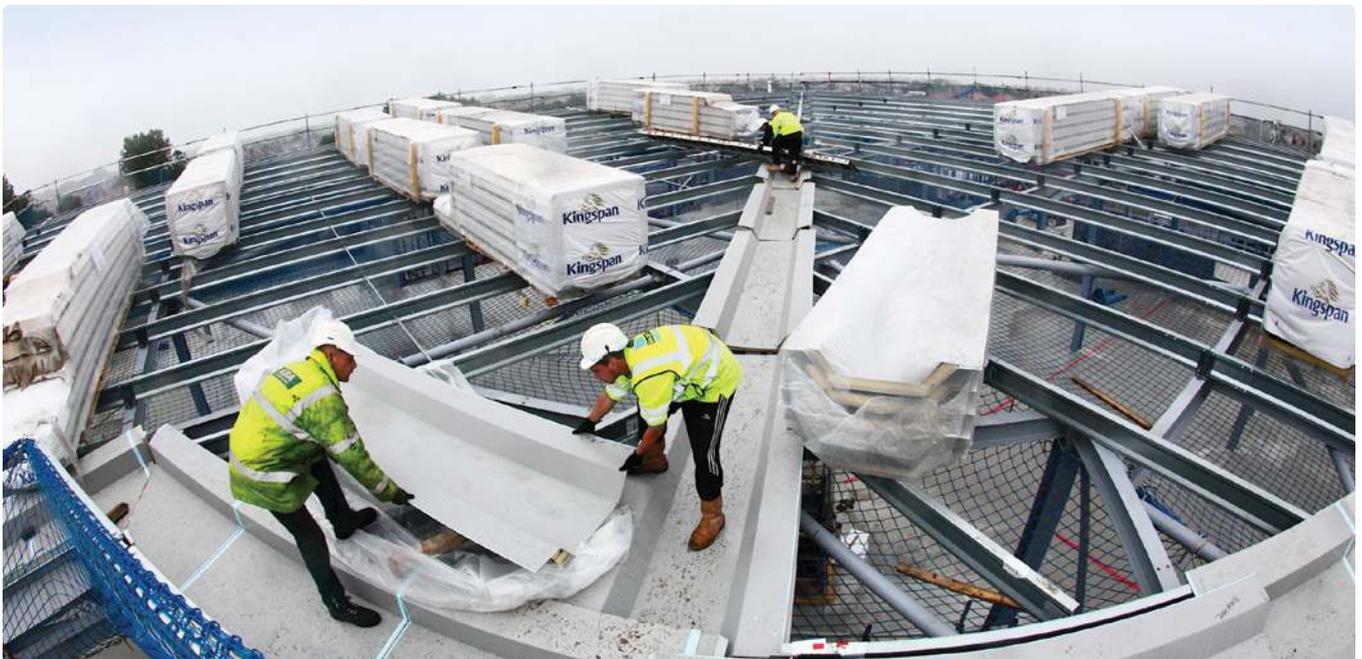
However, along with plans to strengthen primary care delivery, the NHS has also tightened its criteria for funding developments in 2014/15. NHS England has therefore issued guidance for its new primary care provisions, including how it now prioritises future case business submissions.

In order to qualify for the new development funding criteria, it is essential that new business case submissions include as many of the following as possible:

- Engagement with relevant overview and scrutiny committee and/or patient groups
- Support from CCG, LMC and H&WB
- Compliance with principles of best practice
- A risk assessment
- Improved access, quality and/or space utilisation (preferably all)
- A written appraisal and report from the District Valuer with advice regarding best value for money in the development options

Assura Group has the experience and track record to assist GPs in this process and to guide them through the necessary stages to meet business case criteria.

**If you would like to discuss this matter further please visit our website [www.assuragroup.co.uk/GPs](http://www.assuragroup.co.uk/GPs) or contact us via the details listed below for further information**



If you are interested in more information or would like details on how Assura Group can help develop your property, you can get in touch in the following ways:

**01925 420660**  
**[info@assuragroup.co.uk](mailto:info@assuragroup.co.uk)**