

PROPERTY MATTERS

ISSUE: 1



Letter from Graham Roberts, chief executive of Assura Group



Hello, and welcome to the first issue of our revamped newsletter.

I am Graham Roberts, chief executive of Assura Group. I joined the business in March 2012 and since then it has been a pleasure getting to know many of you, staff, patients and stakeholders over the last 12 months. This is a period of real change for the NHS, and we are all learning to adapt to the new requirements of primary care in 2013.

GPs are facing more challenges than ever before. In order to make a real difference to the capabilities of our GP clients, Assura Group has already invested in over 170 properties across the UK, ensuring patients and practice staff have access to premises that are highly functional and fit for purpose. We hope you enjoy finding out more about our activities over the next few pages.

Graham Roberts

NEWS



Assura Group welcomes Dr James Kingsland OBE as medical advisor

Assura Group is very pleased to welcome Dr James Kingsland OBE as its new medical advisor.

Dr Kingsland's experience as NHS clinical commissioning community lead and his successful 25-year career as a GP in Wirral, Merseyside means that his input into the business will be invaluable. He will assist in the delivery of practical healthcare solutions to Assura Group's core customers.

Shortlist achieved for prestigious industry award

We are pleased to have been shortlisted for the prestigious 2013 HealthInvestor Awards in the Property Investor of the Year category.

The awards recognise excellence and innovation in the healthcare sector. Results will be announced at a black-tie dinner held in London on Wednesday 12 June.

FEATURED PROPERTY

St Hilary Group Practice, Wallasey, Wirral - £2.5 million medical centre

St Hilary Group Practice was opened in July 2012 by Sir David Nicholson, chief executive of the NHS, and was described as one of the most advanced centres in the North West. Assura Group funded the development and is now the long-term landlord for the building, which provides purpose built premises for St Hilary Brow Group Practice, plus integrated and diagnostic services such as ultrasound and physiotherapy. A minor surgery suite also operates on site.

Extended services offered at the new centre will allow practitioners to make speedier diagnoses, make more specific use of hospital resources and allow the completion of more episodes of care in one location.



ASSURA GROUP DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Currently on site with 10 primary care developments at the following locations:

- Huthwaite
- Leicester
- Maidstone
- Y Felinheli
- Harlech
- Chapel House
- Willington
- Silsden
- Redditch
- Sudbury

In addition we have several schemes due to commence shortly.





THE CHANGING FACE OF GENERAL PRACTICE – DR JAMES KINGSLAND & GRAHAM ROBERTS

The role of the GP is changing rapidly, and so is that of our practices. We must, more than ever before, deliver more services to more people by extending both the provision and commissioning of care. Faced with the pressure of too many inadequate primary care properties, the task could not have come at a more challenging time – so what is the answer?

Fundamentally, the role of the GP will endure; to be the best generalists they can be. Nobody is expecting them to develop specialist expertise. However, in a more integrated health service, this does mean being part of a multi-disciplinary team, but still based at where over 80% of all first contact in the NHS occurs – the general practice.

As patients are offered more choice, people will expect more from their community surgeries and practices need to be more ambitious in the delivery of care to their registered population. General practice will also be expected to complete more episodes of care from the 250 million contacts that are currently thought to occur annually within general practice in England.

This will mean expanding primary care teams beyond the practice nurse and administrative support. Patients with complex long-term conditions require the right skill mix of nursing, allied healthcare professionals, diagnostics and social care.

In order to deliver this modern version of primary care, facilities must be improved. A large proportion of primary care estates are unfit for GPs to deliver wider service provision, and will struggle to house the high quality, varied services that are expected.

Our goal should not be to build huge health centres that look and act like mini hospitals – it is important that we maintain the feel of a generalist service – but we must build in space for additional healthcare and community services. The recently opened medical centre in Wallasey for St Hilary Group

Practice is a great example of this new approach to building. Assura Group has created a successful medical

centre that is able to house ultrasound, physiotherapy and other simple diagnostics, an Age UK service, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, return to work advisers, a counselling team and a library service. This is the epitome of the big society and should be applauded.

“Our goal should not be to build huge health centres that look and act like mini hospitals.”

THE SECTOR TODAY...



The Challenges of CQC

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has revealed that hundreds of GPs will have to spend more money on improving the quality of their premises and infection control at their practices in order to avoid closure, as a fifth were non-compliant with at least one of its standards.

In revealing the scale of non-compliance for the first time, the CQC said 20% of GP practices that applied to be registered - 1,545 primary care providers - declared non-compliance with at least one of its 16 essential standards.

Andrew Darke, managing director of Property at Assura Group, said: "We were not surprised that so many surgeries are not compliant. Many GPs are practicing out of premises that are several years old, or were never destined for medical use. Where the property is listed or in a heavily built up area, it is almost impossible to adapt or refurbish the building to meet the criteria set by the CQC.

"The clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) that replaced PCTs at the start of April this year will find themselves under extreme pressure to ensure that their surgeries reach compliance levels as they run the risk of closure. If practices do start to close, there will be an enormous burden placed on other GPs in the vicinity who will be forced to take on additional patients.

"Many GPs are practicing out of premises that are several years old, or were never destined for medical use."

"In many cases, the only option available is to develop new premises. As public sector spending has been slashed, we are seeing more GP surgeries coming together to build and relocate to shared premises. It is often much more effective for surgeries to split expenditure such as occupational costs and utility bills, which allows them to invest in additional staff and therefore provide a better level of care to patients. The new buildings are also totally compliant in regard to disabled access and infection control, which is where most surgeries are currently failing."

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
Fax: 01925 234503