

# *Bucks Free Press*

## **NHS buildings fail key safety checks**

PATIENT care could have been put at risk at south Bucks NHS facilities, inspectors warned after finding breaches over guidelines on issues such as asbestos and legionella.

Health bosses have pledged to spend £1.6m on sites including GP surgeries and hospitals after concerns raised by checks on ten properties.

Statutory guidelines were not met over issues including asbestos, legionella, monitoring of equipment, documentation and facilities for the disabled.

Buckinghamshire NHS Primary Care Trust - which manages the sites - was told to take "immediate remedial action" over some properties.

"Much work" had been carried out already, the PCT said in a statement.

The PCT has already taken a major decision over its facilities in the last month when board members decided to move 14 beds from Chalfont and Gerrards Cross Hospital after a fire inspection.

A report on the site, by Nottingham-based NIFES Consulting Group, said: "Maintenance is mainly reactionary with a lack of planned maintenance."

The findings - obtained by *Bucks Free Press* under the Freedom of Information Act - meant the PCT could not give itself a clean bill of health to national NHS watchdog the Healthcare Commission.

In May, it told the commission it met 22 out of 24 key standards. The other related to staff training.

It had "not met" a requirement to provide healthcare in areas that are "well designed and well maintained".

This included "cleanliness levels in clinical and non-clinical areas that meet the national specification for clean NHS premises".

Five premises - two GP surgeries and three hospitals - were told: "Some of the statutory failings could impact on the quality of patient care."

The reports, given to the PCT last October, said of the five: "Many of the paperwork systems are not being compiled or filed in easily locatable systems.

"Many of the statutory failings noted were within the checking and monitoring of equipment, plant and systems as the surveys carried out were of a non-intrusive nature."

A PCT statement said the inspections were part of work to "understand the condition of the buildings and estate Buckinghamshire PCT inherited from previous organisations".

This year £794,000 will be spent on improvements with £1.662m over ten years, it said.

Katie Donlevy, PCT director of provider services, said: "We are aware that Buckinghamshire PCT needs to undertake a programme of work during this financial year in order to tackle some of the recommendations from the NIFES reports.

"Much work has already been undertaken including removal of asbestos, PAT testing, maintenance of boilers and plant and essential works to meet regulations.

"We are in the process of developing a comprehensive maintenance and renewal programme for the next five years."

Leigonella is a bacteria that can cause Legionnaires' disease, a potentially fatal type of pneumonia found in water droplets.

Other premises affected were: Chiltern Court, Chesham; Buckingham Place, High Wycombe; Bourne End Clinic; Sherwood House, Chesham and Roan House, Great Missenden.

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*By Oliver Evans*

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