

EAS



Keep faith with Keane

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Out-of-hours GP care 'inadequate'

CONTINUED CRITICISM: 'Not meeting needs of rural communities'

By Colin Adwent

SUFFOLK'S out-of-hours GP service has come under more withering criticism amid claims of not serving the needs of rural communities.

Keith Cuninghame, a trustee of the Wickham Market Partnership, branded the quality of care being provided for more than 30,000 residents in the area as "inadequate".

Mr Cuninghame believes the system - run by Take Care Now - can be haphazard, leaving people to feel they have no option but to make a 34-mile round trip to Ipswich to address their health concerns.

He said: "Our feeling is that it really has not been delivering in terms of access to the service. I feel the level of care provided has deteriorated steadily.

"It used to be every night and every weekend. Now there are occasional sightings of a doctor at weekends, but that is increasingly rare.

"We have quite often found there is confusion on the part of people answering the phone who tell you the service is there when it isn't.

"It means people have to go to the Riverside Clinic, in Ipswich, which is quite a long way and there is a great temptation to go the accident and emergency department of Ipswich Hospital instead.

"That's not very satisfactory because it risks clogging up accident and emergency with cases that are not emergencies."

Mr Cuninghame's comments come after concerns emerged over the service in an official report released last Friday. The Care Quality

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May's trekking in memory of aunt

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WELL-EARNED REST: May de la Rue, who is halfway through a fundraising coastal challenge

Photographs: ANDY ABBOTT

Trek in memory of auntie

CHARITY WALK: 10-year-old sets herself 50-mile challenge to help disabled young people

By Colin Adwent

ACCOMPANIED by her sea captain teddy bear, blue speckled monkey and her doting father, charity walker May de la Rue is an inspiration.

The 10-year-old pupil of Abbey School, Woodbridge, is currently taking part in a 50-mile challenge which would have made her late aunt proud.

May, from Melton, wanted to do something in memory of her aunt Emma Hughes after she died during the summer.

The pair were always close and Emma loved the outdoors so much she even spent May's first night in a tent with her.

Now May is repaying that love and devotion in a touching tribute to her aunt.

Along with her father, Colin, the pair are walking the Suffolk Heath and Coastal Path from Felixstowe to Lowestoft, in stages during a charity trek.

May hopes to raise at least £10,000 – a thousand pounds for each year of her life – and is hoping corporate

and private donors will give generously.

She said: "I am doing the walk in memory of my auntie. I hope to raise funds for the Suffolk Foundation to help disabled young people get out and about, so they too can enjoy their surroundings, and to improve and enrich their lives in other ways."

"And as these things were important to Emma, I hope that, like me,

“ Emma would probably have said 'I wish I could come with you' May de la Rue

others may be inspired to support them too.

"Emma would probably have said 'I wish I could come with you'."

This weekend the de la Rues reached the half-way point of their journey, setting out from Snape Maltings on Saturday and arriving at Aldeburgh. Their trip is being

done in stages, on weekends and school holidays, with Mr de la Rue arranging various activities and visits along the way.

As a keepsake he is also recording people, places, and observations, as well as often searching conversations between the father and daughter.

A photographic diary of their journey is constantly being updated on May's website www.fiftymileswithmydad.com

Fortified by Kendall mint cake, May has enjoyed herself during her trip, catching a 15cm crab, taking a boat trip from Orford Quay, and walking on Shingle Street beach.

"It is a fantastic idea and wonderful undertaking," said Suffolk Foundation's chief executive officer Stephen Singleton. "May's idea is inspirational and we are all right behind her."

May and her father are planning to finish the walk in Lowestoft on October 25.

To sponsor May's trek log on to www.justgiving.com/50mileswithmydad

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ON COURSE: May de la Rue with her father Colin in Aldeburgh