

# High quality services across the country

Improving GP services in the most deprived communities has long been a goal of the National Health Service. The inequality in provision of GP and primary care services – with poorer provision and fewer doctors where need was greatest – was again identified by Lord Darzi as a major shortcoming in his recent review.<sup>1</sup>

Since 2003, Rory McCrea and Sarah Chilvers have been working to help close this healthcare divide. In 2003 they set up ChilversMcCrea and took over the management of their first practice in Chelmsford in Essex. The Galleywood Medical Centre had been consistently failing patients for years. Services were poor and patients were unhappy. Through its innovative approach and by listening and responding to patients, ChilversMcCrea has turned around its performance, providing high-quality services which the community values. Every year since the practice was taken over it has scored more than 90 per cent on the Government's Quality and Outcomes measure.

Their success at Chelmsford has been replicated across the country. ChilversMcCrea now runs over 35 NHS practices and is the largest alternative provider of primary care services.

Many of the practices that Rory and Sarah and their management team took over were performing so badly that a complete overhaul was needed including new computer systems and new doctors and other staff. The result has been a dramatic improvement in patient care with QOF results now averaging in excess of 90%.

<sup>1</sup>"Areas with the fewest GPs have poorer general health and greater deprivation. Some areas only have 43 GPs per 100,000 people compared to 88 GPs per 100,000 people in areas with the best coverage." Department of Health press release, *Strengthening family doctor services*, 5 May 2008.